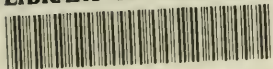


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THE FIRST DAY

OF THE

BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

ON THE 8TH OF MARCH, 1880.

BY

CHAPMAN BIDDLE,

(Formerly Colonel of the One Hundred and Twenty-First Pennsylvania Volunteers.)

PRINTED BY

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., PHILADELPHIA.

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THE failure of Hooker in the early part of the month of May of the year 1863 at Chancellorsville, following within a few short months the repulse of the Army of the Potomac at Fredericksburg, produced a profoundly painful impression on the public mind in the Northern States. For a second time it became necessary for the Army of the Potomac to recross the Rappahannock, and to seek security on the commanding heights of Stafford, while it prepared itself for a renewal of the contest which every lover of the Union most earnestly hoped might lead to favorable results. Notwithstanding his recent and signal success, Lee fully realized the fact that it had been achieved, to use the language of Longstreet, "at such a terrible sacrifice that half a dozen such victories would have ruined" him; or as Lee himself subsequently stated in conversation to Major Seddon, "At Chancellorsville we gained another victory; our people were wild with delight. I, on the contrary, was more depressed than after Fredericksburg; our loss was severe, and again we had gained not an inch of ground, and the enemy could not be pursued." . . . "I considered the problem in every possible phase, and to my mind it resolved itself into the choice of one of two things,—either to retire on Richmond and stand a siege, which must ultimately have ended in surrender, or to invade Pennsylvania. I chose the latter." For in his judgment sound military policy required that he should not only assume the aggressive, but that he should transfer the theatre of the war to the north of the Potomac, where the country had been almost entirely exempt from its devastation and horrors.

Other considerations, too, of even greater importance were intimately connected with the military ones. The material resources of the South had already suffered greatly, and were scarcely adequate to the unintermittent demands which had been, and which were still likely to be, made upon them if the struggle were much longer protracted, and a successful termination of the war on their part seemed to the reflecting portion of the Southern people to be somewhat problematical without either the support or the countenance of England and France. For this latter object the recognition of the independence of the Confederacy was vital, but it had from one cause or other, however, been postponed from time to time, chiefly, as was commonly supposed, by the apprehension of the governments of those countries of rashly committing themselves to an act which might in the future involve them in international complications with the United States of a serious nature. A successful invasion of the North, however, would be succeeded by consequences which the Cabinet of Richmond not unreasonably believed would lead to the realization of their earnest desires. Hence under these combined political and military considerations a plan of campaign was prepared without delay and speedily put in execution. In his first or preliminary official report of the battle of Gettysburg, General Lee thus outlines his views upon the subject: "The corresponding movements on the part of the enemy, to which those contemplated by us would probably give rise, might offer a fair opportunity to strike a blow at the army" of General Hooker,—that in any event that army would be compelled to leave Virginia, that the enemy's plan of campaign be broken up, and that "in addition to these advantages it was hoped that other valuable results might be attained by military success." As one of these other results it has been stated with a certain degree of positiveness in some of the Southern newspapers that it was part of Lee's purpose to fire and in this manner destroy the anthracite mines of Pennsylvania. But be this as it may, Lee in his final report, of January, 1864, of the Pennsylvania campaign, etc., makes no allusion to any anticipated additional valuable results. General Early, who has since, with a number of others, discussed the subject of the propriety of the invasion, considers that it was, at the time it was undertaken, "a wise and judicious movement, notwithstanding the fate that attended it."¹

The first step towards the execution of the new plan was the reorganization of the Army of Northern Virginia, which was then formed into three *corps d'armée*, each under the command of a lieutenant-gen-

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 56.

eral. Longstreet was assigned to the first corps, composed of the divisions of McLaws, Pickett, and Hood; the second, comprising the divisions of Early, Rodes, and Johnson, was placed under the command of Ewell, in accordance with a request made by Stonewall Jackson, on his death-bed, out of solicitude for the welfare of his veterans;¹ and the third, whose divisions were under Anderson, Heth, and Pender, was assigned to A. P. Hill. The cavalry, which had also been strengthened by several new brigades from the South, was formed into a separate corps of three divisions, commanded by Hampton, Fitz-Hugh Lee, and William H. F. Lee.² Major Von Boreke, a Prussian officer, who was the assistant adjutant and inspector-general of General J. E. B. Stuart, in referring to this body of cavalry, remarks that "the magnificent spectacle of so many thousand troopers splendidly mounted made the heart swell with pride, and impressed one with the conviction that nothing could resist the attack of such a body of troops."³ In the opinion of General Lee's military secretary, the recent victories of the Confederate army, "with the care bestowed on its reorganization, equipment, and discipline," rendered "its spirit and efficiency unsurpassed by any army of modern times."⁴

Longstreet, one of Lee's best lieutenants, and on whom great reliance was placed, doubted, however, from the first the wisdom of the proposed invasion from a military point of view, and urged upon his chief that the campaign could only be brought to a successful issue provided it were made "offensive in strategy, but defensive in tactics." Indeed, he went so far as to present, as a substitute, an entirely different plan, one which contemplated "the idea of a Western forward movement." However just or otherwise Longstreet's views may have been, it is not important now to discuss them, though it may be mentioned that Early has declared Longstreet's plan of a tactical defense to be "a simple absurdity."⁵ At all events, Lee remained fixed in and acted upon his opinion, and when recurring to the subject a short time before Grant crossed the Rapidan, in the spring of 1864, said to General Heth, in the course of conversation, "If I could do so,—unfortunately I cannot,—I would again cross the Potomac and invade Pennsylvania. I believe it to be our true policy notwithstanding the failure of last year. An invasion of the enemy's country breaks up all of his preconceived plans, relieves our country of his presence, and we subsist

¹ Von Boreke, p. 399.

² *Idem*, p. 399.

³ *Idem*, p. 402.

⁴ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 119.

⁵ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 281, note.

while there on his resources. The question of *food for this army* gives me more trouble and uneasiness than *everything else combined*; the absence of the army from Virginia gives our people an opportunity to collect supplies ahead. The legitimate fruits of a victory if gained in Pennsylvania could be more readily reaped than on our own soil. We would have been in a few days' march of Philadelphia, and the occupation of that city would have given us peace."¹

When the reorganization of the army and other preliminaries had been completed, Lee, on the 3d of June, commenced his Northern movement. The division of McLaws marching out of Fredericksburg for Culpepper Court-House, followed by Ewell's corps on the 4th and 5th; Hood's division and Stuart's cavalry moving at the same time. So that by the 8th of that month two of the corps and Stuart's cavalry had concentrated at Culpepper Court-House.

Early in June, Hooker had obtained information that Lee was gradually withdrawing his forces from Fredericksburg in the direction of Culpepper Court-House. To test the accuracy of this intelligence, which, if true, was most important in its relation to the campaign then about opening, he directed a reconnoissance in force to be made by the cavalry, supported by two small brigades of infantry. The result of this reconnoissance, which, if its objects are kept in view, was altogether favorable, has not only been magnified into a severe repulse on the part of the Union forces by General Lee, but Longstreet has even censured Lee for failing to pursue his advantage by hurling the heavy Confederate corps then at Culpepper Court-House upon the Federal detachment. Assuredly the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac have no reason to regret the issue of the engagement at Beverly Ford, or, as it is sometimes termed, that of Brandy Station. It was the first occasion when as a body it went into action, and whilst perhaps, if the divisions of Buford and Gregg had been connected from the first, instead of having been separated by an interval of five or six miles, when crossing the Rappahannock on the 9th of June at Beverly and Kelly's Fords, still greater results might have been achieved, yet their work was both faithfully and well done. Stuart's headquarters were captured, and from them was supplied information which enabled Hooker to keep pace with the invading army; Stuart's march was thereby delayed; the direction of Lee's army was changed and prevented from attempting to cross the Potomac near Washington, and Stuart held in check by the subsequent brilliant engagements of Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville,

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 153.

on the 17th, 19th, and 21st days of June, until the Union army had moved into Maryland. At Upperville, "very many charges were made and the sabre used freely, but always with great advantage to"¹ the Federal troops. The valuable services rendered by the cavalry will again appear when the events connected with the great battle of Gettysburg are brought to notice.

Quick to comprehend the significance of the intelligence thus imparted to him by the reconnoissance, Hooker became at once convinced that the movement northward on the part of Lee was the commencement of a real campaign, and, as a preparatory measure, placed General Reynolds, on the 12th of June, in command of the right wing of the army, consisting of his own (the First), the Third, and the Eleventh Corps, which, after it faced about and commenced its northward march, became the left wing, together with the cavalry, directing him to proceed along the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to Manassas. The remaining four corps of the Federal army followed on the succeeding day. As soon as it was known to Hill that Hooker had withdrawn his forces from the heights in front of Fredericksburg, the former commenced his march in the direction of Ewell, who, under his instructions, had proceeded down the Valley of Virginia. Before Ewell reached the Potomac, Lee notified Stuart that the former would cross that river on a certain day and at a certain point, that Hill was to follow, and that Longstreet would hold the gaps in the mountains and protect the crossing of those two corps. After Hill had crossed Longstreet was to vacate the gaps and follow Hill. When this had been accomplished Stuart was to seize the gaps and protect Longstreet's crossing; later he was to throw himself on the right flank of the army, watch the enemy, furnish information, and *collect supplies*. To cover the two corps in their march through the valley, Longstreet left Culpepper Court-House on the 15th, pursuing the route along the easterly side of the Blue Ridge, occupying the gaps as occasion required, whilst Stuart, under his discretionary powers from Lee, moved in front and on the right flank of Longstreet. Meanwhile, Hooker, closely watching the movements of his adversary, skillfully manœuvred so as to guard the approaches to Washington, keeping himself at the same time in a position instantly to assail Lee whenever a fitting opportunity might offer. The intended act of invasion, however, in a dispatch of the 15th to the President, Hooker characterized as one of desperation on the part of Lee, "no matter in what force he moves."

¹ Report on the Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 280.

After one or two affairs in the valley, by which Milroy was brushed away, the First and Third Corps of the Confederate army, on reaching the Potomac, crossed it, the former at Williamsport and the latter at Shepherdstown, and uniting at Hagerstown, from there marched up the Cumberland Valley to Chambersburg, arriving at the latter place on the evening of the 27th. Ewell had entered Pennsylvania on the 22d with two of his divisions, preceded by Jenkins's cavalry, which numbered, according to General Stuart's estimate, about three thousand eight hundred¹ (but which number Fitz-Hugh Lee regards as a misprint for sixteen hundred²), and from Chambersburg had sent one of his divisions, that under the command of General Early, through Gettysburg to York, and the other to Carlisle. On the 26th of June, Early entered Gettysburg with five thousand infantry and a squadron of cavalry, and whilst there endeavored, in execution of one of Lee's general objects, to levy contributions on the town. His requisition for supplies, including shoes, amounted in the aggregate to about six thousand dollars. To this, however, the town was altogether unable to respond, and being satisfied that such was the fact he made no effort to enforce his demand. The next day he resumed his march to Hanover Junction and York, intending to advance from the latter place upon Harrisburg, in obedience to orders which had been issued upon the supposition that Hooker was still on the other side of the Potomac. Early's advance upon Harrisburg was, however, arrested in consequence of intelligence having been received by General Lee on the night of the 28th, from a scout, to the effect that the Federal army had not only crossed the Potomac, but that the head of the column was then at Frederick City. The communications of the Confederate forces being thus threatened, it became, in Lee's opinion, absolutely necessary—and it may be in consequence of a suggestion from Longstreet that the order was given—to concentrate the army to the east of the mountains, and thereby check any farther movement on the part of Hooker to the west.

Throughout his entire march the vigilance of Hooker had been unceasing, so that at the moment he became convinced that his adversary had either crossed or was about to cross the Potomac he commenced the passage of the river some thirty-five or forty miles below Shepherdstown, on the 25th and 26th, at Edward's Ferry. Without at all intending to enter into a discussion of Hooker's plan of campaign after his army reached Maryland, it is nevertheless proper to refer briefly to its leading features, which contemplated confining the enemy to a single

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 76.

² *Idem*, vol. v. p. 165.

line of invasion by seizing Turner's and Crampton's Passes of the South Mountain; the cutting of their communication at Williamsport, and abandoning the indefensible post at Harper's Ferry, together with Maryland Heights opposite, which was at that time a strategic point of no consequence, which defended no ford in the river, and which was not a defense to the Cumberland Valley.¹ To secure the first object General Reynolds was directed to send detachments to seize those passes in the mountain near Boonsboro', and to take position in the valley at Middletown with the left wing.² In connection with the second, the left wing at Middletown would be available for an attack upon Lee, in flank, in case he should attempt to turn upon the corps sent by Hooker from below to operate against the Confederate rear.³ Captain Chesney, of the Royal Engineers, professor of military history, Sandhurst College, a military critic of some reputation, in referring to this plan, says, "We may search the history of modern campaigns in vain to find a more striking example of the effect produced by operating on the enemy's communications than that of this movement of Hooker's." . . . "A glance at the map will show why the little town of Gettysburg" was chosen by Lee, "as the most convenient point whereon to assemble his scattered divisions; lying, as it does, nearly equidistant from the stations they occupied at Hagerstown, Chambersburg, Carlisle, and York."⁴ General Halleck, however, then general-in-chief of the Union army, declined to approve the abandonment of Harper's Ferry and Maryland Heights, although in less than two days thereafter he reversed his decision on this point at the request of General Meade, who, in the mean time, had been appointed to the command of the Army of the Potomac. Hooker felt, and by no means unnaturally, that to have his plans thus interfered with on the eve of the important operations about to commence was calling in question his military capacity in such a manner as to leave him no alternative but to request to be at once relieved from his command. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 27th he telegraphed to Washington his desire, and on the following morning, Sunday, he received by the hands of a special messenger official notification of his having been relieved, together with an order directing him to turn over the command to General Meade, then in charge of the Fifth Corps, "a brave and accomplished officer, who,"

¹ Report on the Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 174.

² *Idem*, Part I., p. 169.

³ *Idem*, Part I., p. 174.

⁴ Campaigns in Virginia, Maryland, etc., by Captain Chesney, R.E., vol. ii. p. 31.

as Hooker, in his farewell order to the army, adds, "had nobly earned the confidence and esteem of this army on many a well-fought field."¹ Thus was terminated the connection of General Hooker with the Army of the Potomac. Whatever opinions in regard to his ability as a chief on the field of battle may be entertained in consequence of the unfortunate issue of Chancellorsville, he is nevertheless justly entitled to high commendation for strategic skill, zeal, and vigilance while conducting that portion of the campaign of 1863 commencing on the return of the army to the heights of Stafford, and terminating upon his withdrawal from that army at Frederick City.

On assuming his most responsible trust, General Meade, in a short and manly order to his army, gave expression to the almost universal sentiment of the people of the North by declaring that "the country looks to this army to relieve it from the devastation and disgrace of a hostile invasion." In ignorance of the exact condition of his own forces, as well as of the position of the enemy, he could only at the moment indicate a general purpose of at once moving in the direction of the Susquehanna, "keeping Washington and Baltimore well covered; and if the enemy is checked in his attempt to cross the Susquehanna, or if he turns towards Baltimore, to give him battle." Late in the evening of the same day he communicated to Halleck his intention of moving on the following day on three lines to Emmetsburg and Westminster. His headquarters at 4 P.M. on the 30th were at Taneytown, about eighteen miles in a southeasterly direction from Gettysburg, the left wing of his army, again under the command of Reynolds, in advance, in a northwesterly course from general headquarters, and considerably nearer to Gettysburg, whilst his right wing was to his east, two of its corps to the south, and the remaining two to the north of Pipe Creek,—his entire force consisting of seven *corps d'armée* of infantry and one of cavalry. Buford, with the First Division of the cavalry, was covering the left flank of the army, having been ordered for the purpose to move from Middletown by the way of Emmetsburg to Gettysburg, and, as appears from one authority, to hold Gettysburg "at all hazards until the army could support him."

The strategic value of Gettysburg had evidently neither been overlooked by Lee and some of his lieutenants, nor by some of the Union commanders, although Major Daniel, of Early's staff, believes that Lee himself had no idea of the great strategic importance of the place.² It

¹ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 294.

² Address of Major Daniel before the Virginia Division of the Army of Northern Virginia, October, 1875, p. 17.

certainly offered to Lee far greater advantages for concentrating his troops than Chambersburg, which, under the idea of a certain immunity from attack, he had first selected, as supposed by some, in pursuance of his defensive tactical policy. General Long, Lee's military secretary, reports the following as the substance of his chief's remarks when the subject of the Northern invasion was under consideration: "Should we defeat General Hooker in a general engagement south of the Potomac, anywhere in the vicinity of Washington, his shattered army would find refuge within the defenses of that city, as two Federal armies have previously done, and the fruits of victory would again be lost. But should we draw him far away from the defenses of his capital, and defeat him on a field of our own choosing, his army would be irretrievably lost, and the victory would be attended with results of the utmost importance. Gettysburg and York were designated as points suitable for such a battle."¹ Gettysburg was, moreover, a position of vast natural strength for defensive operations in the opinion of General Meade,² his assistant adjutant-general, General Williams,³ of General Fitz-Hugh Lee,⁴ and of many other officers both of experience and ability, whilst at the same time it afforded ready access not only to Chambersburg, but also to Hagerstown, Frederick, Taneytown, Baltimore, Hanover, York, Harrisburg, Carlisle, and Shippensburg, thus seeming to fulfill all the conditions which the Confederate chief needed for the realization of his general plan of campaign. Eleven roads, several of them well macadamized, centre at Gettysburg, so that by means of some one or more of them he might have maintained a direct communication with his base at Williamsport far more easily than from Chambersburg, whilst for defensive battle the line from and including Wolf Hill, situate to the southeast of the town, and separated from Culp's Hill by Rock Creek, thence pursuing a northerly direction across the depression made by the creek to and along the summit of Culp's Hill to its junction with Cemetery Hill, thence following the crest of the latter for a short distance in a westerly course, and from thence in a southerly direction, so as to embrace a part of Cemetery Ridge, and include Little Round Top as well as Round Top itself, is one rarely equaled and not often excelled. Hence it may readily be inferred that when, on the night of the 28th, Lee was first informed in regard to the position of the Federal army his whole plan of campaign was suddenly changed, and in the

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 120.

² Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 438.

³ Idem, Part I., p. 465.

⁴ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 73.

language of his final report "it was determined to concentrate the army east of the mountains, as" had been stated in his preliminary report, "our communications with the Potomac were thus menaced." . . . "Accordingly, Longstreet and Hill were directed to proceed from Chambersburg to Gettysburg, to which point General Ewell was also instructed to march from Carlisle." In mentioning the 28th as the date when Lee first obtained information in reference to the Union army, it is not to be lost sight of that in his first report he states that the intelligence was received from a scout "on the night of the 29th," and that in this Longstreet concurs,¹—the latter adding that early on the morning of the succeeding day he had sought his chief for the purpose of suggesting, if necessary, whether this report ought not to produce a change of direction of the head of their column to the right. But Lee was in error as to its being the 29th, and in his final report he so admits by declaring that "the advance against Harrisburg was arrested by intelligence received from a scout on the night of the 28th," and in the same connection remarking that "Hill's corps was accordingly ordered to move towards Cashtown on the 29th, and Longstreet to follow the next day, leaving Pickett's division at Chambersburg to guard the rear until relieved by Imboden. General Ewell was recalled from Carlisle and directed to join the army at Cashtown or Gettysburg, as circumstances might require." And again, "Heth's division reached Cashtown on the 29th." As to the earlier date Lee is corroborated first by Heth, who says, "On the 29th of June, 1863, General Lee's army was disposed as follows: Longstreet's corps at or near Chambersburg; Ewell's corps, which had been pushed east as far as York, had received orders to countermarch and concentrate on Hill's corps, which lay on and at the base of South Mountain; the leading division (Heth's) occupying Cashtown, at the base of the mountain."² Secondly, by General Fitz-Hugh Lee, who, when mentioning in his "reply to General Longstreet" the date upon which the Federal army crossed the Potomac, is careful to add, "General Lee heard it on the night of the 28th from a scout, and not from his cavalry commander."³ Thirdly, by General Wilcox;⁴ and, fourthly, by General Early, who distinctly says that "Lee received information on the night of the 28th of June that the Federal army, then under Hooker, had crossed the Potomac;"⁵ and more pointedly still in his supplement or further "reply to General

¹ *Annals of the War*, p. 419.

² *Southern Historical Society Papers*, vol. iv. p. 157.

³ *Idem*, vol. v. p. 166; see *idem*, vol. iv. p. 74.

⁴ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 112.

⁵ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 242, and also p. 288; Major Daniel's Address, p. 13.

Longstreet," in which he says that the statement of Longstreet, "that the information of the crossing of the Potomac by the Federal army was received from a scout on the night of the 29th of June, is erroneous. General Longstreet's own report, as well as General Lee's detailed one, show that the information was received on the night of the 28th. If it had not been received until the night of the 29th it would have been impossible for the order to return to reach me at York by the way of Carlisle in time for me to begin my march back early enough on the 30th to reach Gettysburg in time for the fight on the 1st of July. The fact was that I received the order on the morning of the 29th, at York, with the information that the enemy had crossed the Potomac and was moving north." Longstreet has rather recently admitted, in a second article on "The Mistakes of Gettysburg," that "there were two or three trifling inaccuracies in his first account of this battle which need correction," and in regard to the important date adds, "The scout upon whose information the head of our column was turned to the right reported at Chambersburg on the night of the 28th of June. It is printed the 29th."¹

The suggestion on the part of Longstreet was received by Lee with a ready acquiescence, as at the time the Confederate army was well in hand, with the exception of Stuart's cavalry. A movement towards Meade's army was commenced immediately. Hill's corps, then lying between Chambersburg and Cashtown, west of the mountain, was advanced without delay; the divisions of McLaws and Hood, of Longstreet's corps, following, while the division of Pickett, of the latter corps, remained by order of Lee at Chambersburg as a rear-guard. Rodes and Johnson's divisions, of Ewell's corps, were recalled from Carlisle, and directed to unite with the remainder of the army at or near Cashtown, notwithstanding they had, according to Rodes, "contemplated with eagerness" an advance upon Harrisburg, which was to have been executed on the 30th. These last divisions bivouacked on the night of the 30th at Heidlersburg, a small village, distant some ten or twelve miles to the north and east of Gettysburg. Longstreet's two divisions were, however, only able to march as far as the village of Greenwood, ten miles east of Chambersburg, on the Cashtown Road, in consequence of the wagon-trains of Ewell and Hill's corps blocking the road, and there encamped on the 30th. Hill's corps, consisting of the divisions of Anderson, Heth, and Pender, and five battalions of artillery, was encamped on the morning of the 29th near Fayetteville,

¹ *Annals of the War*, p. 632.

on the road from Chambersburg to Gettysburg. Hill had been directed to move on this road in the direction of York, to cross the Susquehanna, and thus threaten the communications of Harrisburg with Philadelphia, and further to co-operate with Ewell according to circumstances. In consequence, Heth's division was moved on the same day to Cashtown, the division of Pender following on the morning of the 30th, and Anderson ordered to march in the same direction on the morning of the 1st of July. On arriving at Cashtown, Heth sent forward Pettigrew's brigade to Gettysburg, which there encountered Buford's cavalry. Intelligence of this was at once dispatched by a courier to Lee, and Anderson directed to make an early start; Ewell at the same time was notified by Hill that he "intended to advance the next morning and discover what was in his front."¹ The statement published by Heth of the encounter with Buford's cavalry is interesting in this connection;² he says, "Hearing that a supply of shoes was to be obtained in Gettysburg," . . . "and greatly needing shoes for my men, I directed General Pettigrew to go to Gettysburg and get these supplies. General Pettigrew, on the 30th of June, with his brigade, went near Gettysburg, but did not enter the town, returning the same evening to Cashtown, reporting that he had not carried out my orders, as Gettysburg was occupied by the enemy's cavalry, and that some of his officers reported hearing drums beating on the farther side of the town; that under these circumstances he did not deem it advisable to enter Gettysburg. About this time General Hill rode up, and this information was given him. He remarked, 'The only force at Gettysburg is cavalry, probably a detachment of observation. I am just from General Lee, and the information he has from his scouts corroborates that I have received from mine,—that is, the enemy are still at Middleburg, and have not yet struck their tents.' I then said, 'If there is no objection, I will take my division to-morrow and go to Gettysburg and get those shoes!' Hill replied, 'None in the world.'" General Long (Lee's military secretary) states, however, that the first intelligence which his chief received of the movements of the enemy was his arrival at Emmetsburg, which is several miles northwest of Middleburg.³ Such in brief was the general military situation of the Confederate forces on the night of the 30th of June, as has been gathered from the various official reports of their principal generals and from other sources. As has already been mentioned, Hill was aware on the 30th that Gettysburg was occupied

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 222.

² *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 157.

³ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 122.

by a cavalry force of the Federal army, and had not only promptly reported the fact to his commander-in-chief, but had also notified Ewell, who had been recalled from Carlisle, of his intention to advance the next morning to ascertain what was in his front. The main, perhaps the only, object he had in view in thus communicating with Ewell, was to obtain the latter's assistance in his contemplated movement upon Gettysburg. In thus seeking to consolidate the strength of the two corps of the Confederate army at that point, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Hill anticipated something more than the resistance which a mere cavalry detachment was capable of offering, and that consequently he did not implicitly rely upon the reports of his scouts that the enemy were still stationed at Middleburg. But be this as it may, the purpose of Lee, as disclosed in his first report, was to concentrate his army east of the mountains at Gettysburg. His language is: "Accordingly, Longstreet and Hill were directed to proceed from Chambersburg to Gettysburg, to which point General Ewell was also instructed to march from Carlisle," and which seems to admit of no other interpretation. It is nevertheless true that in his detailed report of January, 1864, prepared six months after the battle, the order to Ewell is put quite differently, and that officer is there given the alternative of joining the army either at Cashtown or Gettysburg, as circumstances might require.¹ But, at all events, it can hardly be denied that concentration meant and could mean but one of three things, that is, either an offer of battle, or the acceptance of battle, or a retreat. In the opinion of General Alexander, the chief of artillery of Longstreet's corps, "the concentration which was ordered at Gettysburg was intended as an offer of battle."² General Early goes farther, and says expressly that when Meade moved his army near enough to Lee's to render concentration necessary, "the only alternative left the latter was a battle or a retreat."³ General Fitz-Hugh Lee, in considering this subject, remarks, "The truth is, General Lee and his army were full of fight, their 'objective-point' was the Federal army of the Potomac, and 'those people' the Confederate chief had resolved to strike whenever and wherever the best opportunity occurred, 'strategically offensive and tactically defensive' to the contrary notwithstanding. An army of invasion is naturally an offensive one in strategy and tactics, and history rarely points to an instance where it has been concentrated on a given point to patiently await an attack. The distance from its base making supplies a difficult matter

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 39.

² *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 99.

³ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 281, note.

to procure, in itself regulates the whole question. An army so situated must move or fight."¹ Heth fully concurs with Fitz-Hugh Lee as to the fighting qualities of their chief, saying that "Lee, not even excepting Jackson, was the most aggressive man in his army," and that "had he seen fit could have assumed a defensive position, and popular opinion in the Northern States would have forced the commander of the Federal army to attack."² Whilst Heth, as has already been mentioned, regards the battle of Gettysburg as "the result purely of an accident, for which he was probably more than any one else accountable," yet as he is sometimes in error upon important points, as, for example, in reporting a conversation of General Lee respecting the fight at Gettysburg on the third day, the general is made to say, "I shall ever believe if General Pender had remained on his horse half an hour longer we would have carried the enemy's position,"³ whereas if General Lane, of North Carolina, is to be relied on,—“Pender was mortally wounded on the right of his line by an artillery shot on the afternoon of the 2d of July, and was taken to the rear, where he was on the 3d of July, and could not even mount his horse,”⁴—care must be exercised in accepting his narrative in all its particulars. Finally, in his detailed report, Lee admits that he was "unable to wait an attack," and that a battle had therefore become "in a measure unavoidable," although it had not been intended to deliver one "so far from his base unless attacked."

A careful comparison between the Union and Confederate accounts of some of the occurrences in the respective armies shortly prior to the night of the 30th of June will, as might be expected, disclose points of difference more or less material to be considered. Buford, as previously mentioned, had been directed to move with his division of cavalry from Middletown, by the way of Emmetsburg, to Gettysburg. In obedience to his order, but pursuing a more westerly course than the direct road between Middletown and Emmetsburg, he had reached Fountain Dale, a village on the South Mountain, a few miles northwest of Emmetsburg, on the night of the 29th, when from there observing the camp-fires of some of Heth's division near Fairfield in the valley below, got his men in the saddle early the next morning and surprised the Confederate detachment, which hastily fell back towards Cashtown. He declined, however, to press them, for the reason that the noise of the engagement might be heard at army headquarters, where "it might cause

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. v. p. 178.

² Idem, vol. iv. p. 156.

³ Idem, vol. iv. p. 154.

⁴ Idem, vol. v. p. 387.

delay, uncertainty, and derangement of plans." There had also been a slight skirmish at Fairfield on the 28th between the Confederates and the Union cavalry,¹ information respecting both of which had no doubt been immediately reported to Lee at Chambersburg. After his dash Buford at once countermarched to Fountain Dale, and then resumed his way through Emmetsburg to Gettysburg, entering the latter town towards noon,² as, according to one version, two of Hill's brigades were about to occupy Seminary Ridge,³ but according to another and probably the more accurate one,⁴ about an hour after the Confederates had withdrawn to Marsh Creek in consequence of their learning of the near approach of the Federal cavalry. That afternoon Buford encamped on high ground, a mile and a half northwest from the town, between Seminary Ridge and Willoughby Run, and there placed his artillery in position; Gamble's brigade of his division going to the Chambersburg Pike, and Devin's brigade to the east, on the Mummasburg Road, covering the approaches from those directions. From prisoners captured by scouting parties sent from those brigades towards Cashtown and Hunterstown, as well as from other sources, it became evident that an almost immediate movement on the part of the Confederates towards Gettysburg was in contemplation. During the day Buford had informed General Reynolds that "the enemy in his front was increased," and on that night, between ten and eleven o'clock, he further notified the latter that he was "satisfied that A. P. Hill's corps" was "massed just back of Cashtown, about nine miles from this place. Pender's division of this corps came up to-day, of which I advised you." . . . "The enemy's pickets (infantry and artillery) are within four miles of this place, at the Cashtown Road." . . . "A captured scout says, 'Ewell's corps is crossing the mountains from Carlisle, Roach's division being at Petersburg, in advance. Longstreet, from all I can learn, is still behind Hill.'" . . . "Should I have to fall back, advise me by what route."⁵ In reporting to General Halleck at Washington, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon of the 30th, General Meade states that "information seems to place Longstreet at Chambersburg, and A. P. Hill moving between Chambersburg and York," and that "our cavalry drove a regiment out of Gettysburg this A.M."⁶

¹ Notes on the Rebel Invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania, etc., by Jacobs, p. 19.

² *Idem*, p. 22.

³ The Decisive Conflicts of the late Civil War, by De Peyster, p. 27.

⁴ Notes on the Rebel Invasion, by Jacobs, p. 22.

⁵ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 352.

⁶ *Idem*, Part I., p. 483.

In his circular of June 30th to his corps commanders, General Meade announces that he "has received information that the enemy are advancing, probably in strong force, on Gettysburg." . . . "Three corps, First, Third, and Eleventh, are under the command of Major-General Reynolds in the vicinity of Emmetsburg, the Third Corps being ordered up to that point." And in his order, issued the same day, for the march of the army on the 1st of July, whilst directing the First Corps to move to Gettysburg, the Eleventh to Gettysburg (or supporting distance), and the Third to Emmetsburg, Meade repeats that from present information Longstreet and Hill are at Chambersburg, partly towards Gettysburg; Ewell at Carlisle and York. Movements indicate a disposition to advance from Chambersburg to Gettysburg," and being satisfied that he has relieved Harrisburg and Philadelphia, he "desires to look to his own army and assume position for offensive or defensive as occasion requires."¹ In consequence of Buford's report from Gettysburg of "the appearance of the enemy on the Cashtown Road in some force, General Reynolds was directed to occupy Gettysburg,"² whither the enemy were moving, "and where it was not improbable they would reach before the command of Reynolds," . . . "then on its way, could arrive." General Reynolds had, moreover, been instructed, "in the event of finding himself confronted by a superior force," to hold it "in check, if he was able, and to fall slowly back."³ On the judgment of no other officer did Meade rest greater dependence than on that of Reynolds; he was the officer upon whom he "had relied under his instructions."⁴ Indeed, Reynolds was to him as he, affectionately as well as eloquently, expressed himself of his comrade, "not only a lieutenant of the utmost importance," but a friend, a brother, and "the noblest as well as the bravest gentleman in the army."⁵ Amidst the confusion of the reports which crowded upon him respecting the position and the objects of the enemy, the commander-in-chief sought from this able lieutenant and trusted friend advice to determine whether it was "his best policy to move to attack," for as he states in his communication of the 1st of July to Reynolds, "If the enemy is concentrated to the right of Gettysburg, that point would not at first glance seem to be a proper strategic point of concentration for this army. If the enemy is concentrating in front of Gettysburg or to the left of it, the general is

¹ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 421.

² Meade's official report, Battle of Gettysburg, by Bates, p. 237.

³ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 356.

⁴ Idem, Part I., p. 348.

⁵ Meade's address to the Pennsylvania Reserves, History of the Pennsylvania Reserves, by Sypher, p. 493.

not sufficiently well informed of the nature of the country to judge of its character either for an offensive or defensive position." . . . "The general having just assumed command in obedience to orders," . . . "would gladly receive from you any suggestions as to the points laid down in this note. He feels that you know more of the condition of the troops in your vicinity and the country than he does." . . . "You have all the information which the general has received, and the general would like to have your views. The movement of your corps to Gettysburg was ordered before the positive knowledge of the enemy's withdrawal from Harrisburg and concentration was received."¹

On his route to Gettysburg Reynolds had on the afternoon of the 30th encamped in the vicinity of a tavern near Marsh Creek, about five miles south and west of the town. At the same time the Eleventh Corps was to the left of Emmetsburg, and the Third between that place and Taneytown. At night, General Howard, the commander of the Eleventh Corps, was requested to report at Reynolds's headquarters, where immediately on his arrival Reynolds showed him Meade's "Confidential address, just issued, in which he required the officers in command fitly to address the troops," and to appeal "to every patriotic sentiment to stimulate his command on the approach of a great battle." He also showed him "in a bundle of dispatches—the information brought to him during the day—evidence of the nearness, position, and designs of the enemy. He sat down with" Howard "to study the maps of the country, and consulted" with him "upon these matters till eleven o'clock at night, the last night of his life."² The notice of this interesting interview is altogether too slight and incomplete on the part of General Howard, for it is highly important to be able to determine what bearing it had on the operations of the succeeding day. A protracted discussion of the probable designs of the enemy from the evidence before them must have led to some conclusion, for so accomplished a soldier as Reynolds was evidently during that night's study and conference considering the possibilities of the morrow, and most probably was preparing himself to carry into successful execution the discretionary powers with which he had been invested by his commander-in-chief. He had been made aware by Buford that the enemy had increased in numbers; that Hill's corps was massed immediately behind Cashtown; that Ewell was crossing the mountains from Carlisle, and that their

¹ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 355.

² Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg, by O. O. Howard, Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, p. 52.

infantry and artillery pickets were within four miles of Gettysburg. His views besides had been freely expressed, and it was known that he favored offering the enemy battle at the earliest suitable moment. General Doubleday mentions a conversation on this subject with Reynolds, which took place just after the Union army had crossed the Potomac, in which the latter urged as a reason that if we gave the enemy "time by dilatory measures or by taking up defensive positions they would strip" Pennsylvania "of everything. Hence he was in favor of striking them as soon as possible. He was really eager to get at them."¹ On the same night, close by Gettysburg, Buford was also considering with one of his brigade commanders the chances of the next day; his opinion was clear that the battle would be fought at that point, but he was apprehensive that "it would be commenced in the morning before the infantry would get up. These," adds the officer who made the statement, "are his own words."² Buford further remarked that "the enemy must know the importance of this position, and will strain every nerve to secure it, and if we are able to hold it we will do well." Reynolds was perfectly well aware that the enemy was concentrating to the left of Gettysburg, and that a collision was imminent; his corps had been ordered to occupy the town which Buford had been instructed to hold, and beyond doubt, in answer to the inquiry of the latter by what route, in case of necessity, he should fall back, he readily promised prompt support so that he might strike the enemy without delay.

There were encamped on the night of the 30th within a radius of eight miles from Gettysburg four of the nine divisions of the Confederate army, numbering with the cavalry and artillery not less than thirty-five thousand men, and one corps of the left wing of the Federal army, besides two of the three brigades of Buford's division of cavalry (the other brigade being at Mechanicstown with the trains), aggregating about ten thousand four hundred; most of the remaining corps of the Union army being at a greater distance, namely, two near Emmetsburg, one at Taneytown, one at Hanover, and one at Manchester. As to the estimate here made of the opposing forces in close proximity to Gettysburg at this time, it seems scarcely necessary to remark that writers on both sides have given not only the actual but the relative numbers widely different from those now presented. In his letter on the relative strength of the two armies, Early insists that as there

¹ Battle of Gettysburg, by Bates, p. 84, and Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 305.

² Statement of Buford's signal-officer, De Peyster, p. 151.

were no regular monthly returns for June, 1863, on account of Lee's army being engaged on the 1st, 2d, and 3d of July at Gettysburg, the estimates made of the Confederate force at the commencement of the battle are unreliable.¹ Lee's military secretary says, "Shortly after the battle of Chancellorsville the Army of Northern Virginia had, by the return of absentees and the divisions of Longstreet, been increased to sixty-five thousand men."² The statement made by Colonel Allan is that "frequently the Confederate reports included more than the effective fighting men. Thus Rodes's 'return' at Carlisle, a few days before Gettysburg, makes his total strength of officers and enlisted men 'eight thousand and fifty-two.' Now Rodes had about six thousand muskets, or less than seven thousand effectives."³ Heth says his division "numbered some seven thousand muskets."⁴ Hooker testified before the Committee on the Conduct of the War that "with regard to the enemy's force I had reliable information. Two Union men had counted them as they passed through Hagerstown, and in order that there might be no mistake they compared notes every night, and if their counts differed they were satisfactorily adjusted by compromise. In round numbers Lee had ninety-one thousand infantry and two hundred and eighty pieces of artillery; marching with that column were about six thousand cavalry. It will be remembered that a portion of the enemy's cavalry crossed the Potomac below Edwards's Ferry, and went into Maryland to join Ewell, between me and Washington; this column numbered about five thousand men."⁵ The Comte de Paris in giving his conclusions as to the numerical strength of both armies at Gettysburg expresses himself thus: "I reckon, therefore, the whole strength of the Army of Northern Virginia in Pennsylvania at about seventy-six thousand present, out of which at least sixty-six thousand were present for duty, and two hundred and sixty-eight guns."⁶ Colonel Taylor, of Lee's staff, in reply to the count, admits that "the three arms of service then numbered as follows: infantry, fifty-three thousand five hundred; cavalry, nine thousand; artillery, four thousand five hundred. Total effectives of all arms, sixty-seven thousand."⁷ So that the estimate of the Confederate force encamped within a radius of eight miles from Gettysburg at not less than thirty-five thousand, on the night of the 30th, may be regarded as being substantially correct.

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 17.

² *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 119.

³ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 39.

⁴ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 158.

⁵ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 173.

⁶ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. v. p. 205.

⁷ *Idem*, vol. v. p. 245.

The duration of the action which was ushered in on the morning of the 1st of July—an action of such momentous consequences to civil liberty, and in some aspects the most important of the series of the conflicts comprehended under the general designation of the battle of Gettysburg—was altogether less than seven hours, during the greater part of which time the struggle was waged on both sides with unusual tenacity and severity. From a military point of view the operations of that day may be divided into four parts,—first, the engagement between Heth and Buford; second, that between the divisions of Heth and Pender on the one side and the First Corps on the other; third, that between the divisions of Heth, Pender, Rodes, and Early and the First and Eleventh Corps; and, fourth, from the repulse of the Federal forces to their occupation of Cemetery Hill.

With the dawn of Wednesday, July the 1st, or even later,¹ Heth and Pender advanced with their divisions from Cashtown to attack the Federal force in their front; at about the same time the divisions of Rodes and Early started from Heidlersburg, where they had encamped the night before, for Cashtown. Two divisions of Longstreet's corps, near Chambersburg, followed after Hill. Pickett in obedience to an order remained at Chambersburg as a rear-guard. Longstreet's two divisions did not arrive on the field during the first day's battle, whilst the remaining divisions of Anderson and Johnson, of the other two corps, reached it when the action was over. Some of the Confederate cavalry were observed at an early hour reconnoitring Buford's force from the Chambersburg Pike, and towards nine o'clock Heth's division of Hill's corps, consisting of four brigades of infantry and five batteries of artillery,² reached the ridge just west of Willoughby Run, a mile or more from Gettysburg. Several of these batteries were at once placed in position near the turnpike, Marye firing the opening gun in shelling the woods in his front. Two brigades of infantry were then deployed to the right and left of the unfinished railroad, part of which was embankment and part deep cut, immediately north of the turnpike, and with this railroad for their line of direction were afterwards ordered to advance and occupy the town. Between half after nine and ten o'clock³ skirmishing commenced,—the first discharge,—a musket-shot, having been fired against some of Gamble's brigade, of Buford's dismounted cavalry. Such was the commencement of the great conflict

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 223, and vol. iv. p. 113.

² Idem, Confederate Roster, vol. iii. p. 119; vol. v. p. 196, and vol. ii. p. 223.

³ Rebel Invasion, etc., by Jacobs, p. 23, and De Peyster, p. 34.

which the troops on both sides had been eager to wage. Almost at once the artillery fire was replied to by Buford's light batteries, one of which was admirably directed by Lieutenant Calif, and the engagement became quite severe. When Buford's men were nearly overpowered, the signal-officer observed from the seminary steeple, in sweeping his glass over the field, the flag of the First Corps, and upon reporting the fact, Buford exclaimed, "Now we can hold the place!"

Leaving his camp near Marsh Creek, some five miles distant from Gettysburg, in a southwesterly direction, early on the same morning, Reynolds hastened along the Emmetsburg Road with Wadsworth's division, of the First Corps, and Hall's battery, directing General Doubleday to bring up the other divisions and the remaining batteries, except the First Brigade, of the Third Division, which had been detailed for picket duty, on the previous afternoon, from Marsh Creek in a westerly direction to Middle Creek, and Cooper's battery of four pieces, which brigade and battery followed independently, under my command, from the cross-roads at Ross White's along a road between the Emmetsburg and Hagerstown Roads, commonly known as the Gettysburg and Nunemaker's Mill Road. Before starting to Buford's assistance Reynolds read to Doubleday his telegrams showing the position of the Federal troops and what they were doing.¹ From various casualties the total effective strength of the First Corps had at the end of June shrunk to a number not exceeding eight thousand two hundred. Reynolds, from recent information, had most probably anticipated an early collision, and being thoroughly self-reliant as well as full of dash, did not in the emergency await additional instructions. Usually riding some distance beyond his corps, he was on this day with his staff considerably in advance of the troops. Whilst thus reconnoitring the different positions which might soon become the theatre of a conflict, a dispatch from Buford was handed to him, when less than three miles from the town, announcing that the enemy were then sorely pressing the cavalry. On the instant Reynolds sent an aide to Wadsworth with a characteristic order "to close up and come on," and dispatched other staff-officers to Howard and Sickles, who were then not far from Emmetsburg, to hasten the movements of the former and to direct the latter to advance without delay. A few minutes later Reynolds, on meeting and inquiring of Buford if he "could hold out until his corps came up?" received from him a brief assurance in the words "I reckon I can."² Hall gives a different account of the interview between Rey-

¹ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 305.

² Statement of Buford's signal-officer, De Peyster, 153.

nolds and Buford, as follows: "Reynolds and staff" were dismounted and sitting near my guns before we hitched up for marching, when Buford, with a small escort of cavalry, came along, and I heard Buford say to Reynolds, 'I have run upon a couple of regiments of infantry near Gettysburg, which, owing to their being in the woods, I am unable to dislodge, and I think you had better move up and feel them.' Reynolds, in my hearing, dictated a message to Meade something like this: 'Buford just now reports that he finds a small force of the enemy's infantry in a point of woods near Gettysburg, which he is unable to dislodge; and while I am aware that it is not your desire to force an engagement at that point, still, from the scope of instructions I have all the time had from you since commanding this wing of the army, I feel at liberty to advance to Gettysburg and develop the strength of the enemy at that point.'"¹

Howard had been ordered by Reynolds, early on the morning of the 1st of July, to advance from Emmetsburg with the Eleventh Corps. This order was received at 8.30 A.M., and having been expected in consequence of Meade's order of march for the 1st of July, Howard at once commenced to move in two columns; Barlow's division, with a battery, being put on the direct road to Gettysburg, and the other two divisions, with the remaining four batteries, on a road leading across to the Taneytown Road, and thence by that road to the town. The direct road being obstructed by artillery carriages and trains, Howard supposed that Barlow's division would not reach Gettysburg until shortly after 1 P.M., and that the other divisions would be there about the same hour. As soon as the columns were started Howard, accompanied by his staff, taking the shortest route, and riding rapidly, occasionally in the woods and fields, reached, as he states, the vicinity of Gettysburg about 10.30 A.M.,² but as to this being the hour of his arrival he is most probably in error, for the evidence on the subject almost certainly fixes it from a half to three-quarters of an hour earlier. Indeed, he himself admits noticing variations in the time that "different officers have recorded the same event," of from a half to three-quarters of an hour from that of his own watch. His chief of artillery, moreover, remarks in his narrative that "at 10 A.M. General Howard received notice from General Reynolds that he had engaged the enemy, and was met by largely superior numbers, and urged General Howard to hurry his corps for-

¹ Brookline Chronicle, February 16, 1878.

² Campaign of Gettysburg, by O. O. Howard, Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, p. 53.

ward as rapidly as possible." . . . "I was with General Howard when he received this notice from General Reynolds, but the batteries were back." . . . "General Howard directing me to bring the batteries forward as rapidly as possible rode to the front."¹ Before this, however, when near Gettysburg, one of General Howard's aides reported to Reynolds the expected early arrival of the Eleventh Corps, upon which, and before leaving for the front, Reynolds desired the aide to return to his commanding officer "with orders to move on rapidly to Cemetery Hill, where he would be put in position."² After Reynolds had reached Seminary Ridge and observed the critical situation of his troops, he sent word to Howard to urge his corps forward, which was the message referred to by Howard as well as by his chief of artillery. Subsequently to the receipt of the order to hasten forward his corps Howard entered the town, and from Fahnestock's observatory had a partial view of what was passing on the field to the north and west in the distance. He there got glimpses, as he says, of Wadsworth's division of infantry fighting near the railroad cut at Seminary Ridge. "Success," he adds, "was then attending him, and prisoners in gray were being conducted into the town." A few minutes later (by his watch about 11.30 A.M.) intelligence was received by him of the death of Reynolds, and that the command of the troops had, in consequence, devolved upon him. As he had previously sent the earnest request from Reynolds back to the columns of Schurz and Barlow, he then, with a full knowledge of what was transpiring and what had transpired at the front, "rode slowly" to the rear, near the cemetery gate, where he soon met Schurz, who had hastened on to see him.³

The area of the field upon which the most important operations of the 1st of July took place scarcely exceeds two square miles. This small parallelogram embraces part of Willoughby Run, which flows in a southerly course, of a ridge between Seminary Ridge and the run, of Seminary Ridge, as well as parts of the Hagerstown, Chambersburg, and Mummasburg Roads, all converging to the town. The two ridges extend nearly north and south. The Hagerstown Road runs in a west-southwesterly direction from Gettysburg, the Chambersburg Pike a little north of west-northwest, and the Mummasburg Road about northwest. The line of the First Corps, extending on its left to near the

¹ Philadelphia Weekly Times, May 31, 1879.

² Battle of Gettysburg, by Bates, p. 68.

³ Campaign of Gettysburg, by O. O. Howard, Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, p. 54.

Hagerstown Road and on its right to the Mummasburg Road, did not greatly, if at all, exceed a mile and a half in length.

Leaving the Emmetsburg Road not far from Codori's house, near the town, and dashing across the fields to the west at a double-quick, Cutler's brigade (with the exception of the Seventh Indiana, which had been detached for special duty), of Wadsworth's division, reached the crest of Seminary Ridge just as Buford's men were beginning to yield to the severe pressure of the enemy. Buford had, however, faithfully discharged his whole duty in the face of heavy odds. He had tenaciously kept his position, and thus rendered it possible for the Union, in its hour of peril, to find its deliverance through the Army of the Potomac. To the boldness, persistence, and gallantry of John Buford, on this and other fields, his country owes his memory a vast debt of gratitude. Hardly had the first regiment of Cutler's brigade arrived on the ground, and taken position to the right of the Chambersburg Pike, before the Confederates advanced in strong force along and upon both sides of that road, and became engaged with the Federal line. The last instructions which General Doubleday had from Reynolds in reference to the battle were, "I will hold on to this road," the Chambersburg Pike, "and you hold on to the other," or the Mummasburg Road.¹ In defending this main highway, leading from Chambersburg to Baltimore through Gettysburg, Reynolds directed the troops of Meredith's brigade, of the First Division, which immediately reached the ridge after Cutler, as they were deploying to the left of the pike, to hurry forward to the parallel ridge in front, and there attack the enemy as they came up its western slope. Meredith's regiments, rapidly forming line of battle as they came successively on the ground, charged the enemy, and drove them precipitately down the slope, back to and across Willoughby Run. Reynolds, who, with the instinct of a soldier, had from the first grasped the important features of the entire field, and who by his prompt and resolute course of action had fixed the site for the greater battle yet to be fought, observed whilst near these troops an advance to the left of a portion of the enemy through the wood: one of Meredith's regiments, the Nineteenth Indiana, just then appearing, he ordered it to charge,—leading the charge in person.² Almost immediately after, and shortly before 11 A.M., a minié-ball, from one of Archer's sharpshooters, entering the back of his neck as he turned to look in the direction of the seminary, caused him to fall from his horse apparently lifeless. Pollard, in his "Southern History of the War," gives an altogether different

¹ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 306.

² De Peyster, p. 37.

version of the occurrence, stating that "the Confederates, distinguishing him from his uniform to be an officer of high rank, opened upon him with heavy volleys of infantry fire. He was struck by several balls, and died instantly without uttering a word."¹ In the vigor of his manhood, and in the fullness of a well-earned military fame, perished this hero upon a field which his genius had fixed for the determination of one of the great and decisive conflicts of the world. "Yet," in the language of another, "where could man meet better the inevitable hour than in defense of his native State, his life-blood mingling with the soil on which he first drew breath?"²

The Twenty-fourth Michigan and the Nineteenth Indiana, two regiments of Meredith's brigade, pursuing the enemy across the run, enfiladed Archer's brigade, and succeeded in capturing Archer, together with the greater part of his troops. Cutler's brigade, which had gone to the right of the Chambersburg Pike, and which was extended in prolongation of the line of Meredith's brigade, became engaged with the enemy a little earlier, the opening infantry fire on the Federal side having come from the Fifty-Sixth Pennsylvania Regiment of Volunteers. This brigade, however, meeting with a force greatly superior to its own numerically, had been compelled to fall back at first on the right, and then along its whole line to a position nearly perpendicular to the one which it had originally assumed, thus not only exposing itself greatly, but also the right flank and rear of the other brigade. The Sixth Wisconsin, Meredith's brigade, which had been held in reserve at the time of the charge against Archer's troops, was at once sent to the assistance of Cutler. Promptly changing front to the north, it, together with the Ninety-Fifth New York and the Fourteenth Brooklyn, of Cutler's brigade, impetuously charged the advancing and victorious line of Davis's Mississippi brigade, forced it back at the point of the bayonet to the railroad cut, and there, after a short but sharp resistance, captured the Second Mississippi Regiment, and portions of the Forty-Second Mississippi and another regiment of the same brigade. This brilliant achievement on the part of the Union arms held the enemy in check for a time. Shortly before 11 A.M. Doubleday's division arrived on the ground, and a little after Robinson's division, of the First Corps,—Robinson's division being at first "kept in reserve behind the seminary;"³ Baxter's, one of its two brigades, going into

¹ Southern History of the War, Third Year, by Pollard, p. 24.

² Oration on General Meade and the battle of Gettysburg before the Society of the Army of the Potomac, May, 1873, p. 13.

³ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 307.

position later on Seminary Ridge to the right of the Chambersburg Pike, north of the railroad cut, and extending as far as the Mummasburg Road,—the Eleventh Pennsylvania forming on the immediate right of Cutler; the Ninety-Seventh New York, the Eighty-Third New York, the Eighty-Eighth Pennsylvania, and the Twelfth Massachusetts successively to the right, all facing west, and the Ninetieth Pennsylvania, the extreme right of the line, being refused, facing to the north, and stretching along the Mummasburg Road. Towards half after twelve o'clock a general firing was renewed, and some of the enemy advancing against Baxter were driven back by a portion of his brigade, including the Eleventh Pennsylvania, in the face of a heavy fire, across an open field, with the loss, notwithstanding repeated reinforcements, of about five hundred prisoners from Iverson's North Carolina brigade, of Rodes's division, of Ewell's corps, the Eighty-Eighth Pennsylvania capturing the colors of the Twenty-Third North Carolina Regiment. General Rodes, describing in his report this part of his engagement, says, "Iverson's left being exposed thus, heavy loss was inflicted upon his brigade. His men fought and died like heroes. His dead lay in a distinctly-marked line of battle. His left was overpowered, and many of his men being surrounded were captured."¹ Pollard states that Rodes, in "riding along behind where their line had been, thought he observed a regiment lying down as if to escape the Yankee fire. On going up, however, to force them into the fight he found they were all corpses."² A heavy skirmish line of the enemy then appearing, supported by lines of battle, caused the Federal brigade, its ammunition being nearly exhausted, to fall back to its original position. Paul's, the other brigade of the division, was moved from the rear of the seminary, where it had been massed, across the railroad cut towards 2 P.M., the troops loading as they advanced, and when they had reached the foot of the ridge pushed up the next slope at the double-quick, encountering at the summit of that ridge the first line of the enemy, who at once threw down their arms and surrendered. But the second line coming up quickly to the support of the first, and reinforcements being also steadily poured in, caused a desperate struggle to ensue, in which the slaughter was not only terrible, but the Union forces, suffering severely, were driven back. Paul's brigade consisted of the Sixteenth Maine, the Thirteenth Massachusetts, the Ninety-Fourth New York, the One Hundred and Fourth New York, and the One Hundred and Seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers.

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 147.

² Southern History of the War, Third Year, by Pollard, p. 25.

Stone's brigade, of Doubleday's division, composed of three Pennsylvania regiments, namely, the One Hundred and Forty-Third, the One Hundred and Forty-Ninth, and the One Hundred and Fiftieth, after it came upon the field took position at a little before noon on the ridge immediately beyond Seminary Ridge, under a heavy fire, with the right resting on the Chambersburg Pike, and the left almost reaching the wood occupied by Meredith's brigade,—its skirmishers thrown forward down the next slope, the pike being held by a number of sharpshooters. This disposition continued unchanged until between twelve and one o'clock, when an enfilading fire from a Confederate battery compelled its right regiment (the One Hundred and Forty-Third) to fall back to Seminary Ridge. Immediately the One Hundred and Forty-Ninth was faced to the north, and thrown out on the pike, and between half after one and two o'clock, as the enemy's infantry moved forward in force, the One Hundred and Forty-Third was ordered to take position on the pike to the right of the former regiment, thus displaying these two regiments at right angles with the One Hundred and Fiftieth, which remained to the right of and near Meredith's brigade, facing west. It was to one of the officers of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Pennsylvania Volunteers that John Burns, of Gettysburg, then an old man of seventy years of age, first applied for permission to fight with the Union troops, and obtaining that permission, fought chiefly with the Seventh Wisconsin until the Federal forces were driven back in the afternoon. As he was falling back with the rest, having already received three wounds, one of them through the arm, a final wound in the leg disabled him. Helpless, and almost bleeding to death, he lay upon the field until early the next morning, when his wounds were dressed by a Confederate surgeon. His heroic conduct met with a suitable recognition both by the United States Congress and the Legislature of Pennsylvania, and the pensions which his valor won him he lived to enjoy until the month of February, 1872. An instance of the bravery of an Emmetsburg lad, akin to that of Burns, is recorded by one of the soldiers of the Twelfth Massachusetts Volunteers. As Baxter's brigade was marching through Emmetsburg it was followed by the village boys, one of whom continued to the camp at Marsh Creek, where he offered to enlist. His offer, however, was ridiculed, and he was sent away. On the morning of the 1st of July he reappeared, and so earnestly entreated the colonel of the Twelfth Massachusetts to be allowed to join his regiment, that a captain of one of the companies was instructed to take him on trial for a day or two. When the regiment halted near the seminary, the boy was hastily dressed in a suit of

blue. Afterwards, during the action, he fought bravely until a bullet striking his musket split it in two pieces, one of which lodged in his hand and the other in his thigh. The unknown boy was taken to the brick church in the town to be cared for, but nothing was afterwards seen or heard of him.¹ As the enemy pressed forward to attack, the One Hundred and Forty-Third and the One Hundred and Forty-Ninth Pennsylvania Volunteers, on the pike, were sent to occupy the railroad cut, about one hundred yards distant to the north. The advance of the enemy from the north having, after a spirited contest, been repulsed, the attack was resumed in force from the west, which was also successfully resisted,—a vigorous bayonet charge driving them back. After retreating a short distance, however, they moved by their right flank and occupied, towards a quarter to three P.M., a wood in front of Meredith's brigade. Not long after three o'clock, Meredith's troops having retired to the crest of the next ridge, the brigade, then under the command of Colonel Langhorne Wister, in danger of being surrounded, gradually fell back to Seminary Ridge, where a new position was taken, and for a time stubbornly maintained. But finally being outflanked by vastly superior numbers, it fell back through the town to Seminary Hill, where it was reformed, and rested in line during the night.

The First Brigade, of Doubleday's division, was under my command, and consisted of the One Hundred and Twenty-First, One Hundred and Forty-Second, and One Hundred and Fifty-First Regiments of Pennsylvania Volunteers, and the Twentieth New York State Militia. Cooper's Battery B, First Pennsylvania Artillery, had on the morning of the 1st of July been attached to the brigade. On that morning, as soon as the pickets of the One Hundred and Twenty-First could be withdrawn, the infantry and artillery were marched from the cross-roads at Ross White's, which lie between Marsh and Middle Creeks, along the Nunemaker Mill Road to Gettysburg, a distance of about seven miles.

When within a mile of the town the sound of heavy firing to the northwest indicated that a sharp engagement was already in progress. The brigade was in consequence rapidly pushed across the fields to open ground, a short distance north of the Hagerstown Road, and about a third of a mile west of the seminary, and there formed, a little before 11 A.M., on the extreme left of the general line of battle. The battery was immediately placed in position, and its fire directed towards the

¹ Brookline Chronicle, February 16, 1878.

northwest, to the left of the woods in which the First Division was then engaged. Upwards of three-quarters of a mile in front were woods nearly parallel with the line of battle and between, somewhat to the left, a house and large stone barn, the latter of which was afterwards used as a cover for the enemy's sharpshooters. To protect the battery from the annoyance which the sharpshooters occasioned a company of skirmishers was sent from the Twentieth New York, who, readily driving the men off, occupied their shelter. Later in the day, towards 3 P.M., Pettigrew's brigade of North Carolina troops, Heth's division, Hill's corps, advancing in two lines and in perfect order, commenced a vigorous attack on the extreme left of the Federal line held by the First Brigade. Of the four small regiments composing the latter brigade, one—the One Hundred and Fifty-First—had been detached about half after two o'clock to be held in reserve, and was posted near the seminary grove until it was subsequently sent forward to occupy the gap between Meredith's and my brigade. Notwithstanding the great disparity in numbers between the contending forces, and that the left of the Federal line was greatly outflanked, the position was maintained with spirit for a considerable time under a severe direct and oblique fire, and until, being without support, the fragments of the four regiments were compelled to retire—towards 4 P.M.—to a partial cover on the edge of the town, close to and west of the seminary, where they continued to resist the progress of the enemy until the batteries and most of the Union troops had withdrawn to Cemetery Hill; then, as the enemy were swarming in on the left, they fell back to the same point, reforming in the rear of its crest. The admirable behavior of the men and officers of the brigade may to some extent be inferred from the fact that out of twelve hundred and eighty-seven officers and men who went into action as the First Brigade of the Third Division, of the First Corps, four hundred and forty were either killed or wounded and four hundred and fifty-seven missing, leaving as its effective strength at the close of the first day's battle three hundred and ninety officers and men.

The various official reports and unofficial published statements of prominent Confederate generals respecting the occurrences on the first day between the contending forces of the corps of Reynolds and Hill are in many respects so essentially different from that which has been here detailed, that it seems but proper to present the material portions of those statements, without, however, undertaking to reconcile the many points of difference between the two accounts. General Hill

reports officially¹ that "about three miles from Gettysburg his advance brigade, Archer's, encountered the advance of the enemy. Archer and Davis were thrown into line, and with some pieces of artillery from Pegram, the enemy were steadily driven back to the wooded hills this side of Gettysburg, where their principal force (since ascertained to be the First and Eleventh Corps) was disposed to dispute our farther advance. Heth's whole division was now thrown into line; Davis on the left of the road; Archer, Pettigrew, and Brokenbrough on the right, and Pender formed in his rear; Thomas on the left, and Lane, Scales, and Perrin on the right. Pegram's and McIntosh's battalions of artillery were put in position on the crest of a hill overlooking the town of Gettysburg. Heth's division drove the enemy, encountering a determined resistance. About half-past two o'clock the right wing of Ewell's corps made its appearance on my left, and thus formed a right angle with my line. Pender's division was then ordered forward, Thomas's brigade being retained in reserve, and the rout of the enemy was complete, Perrin's brigade taking position after position of the enemy and driving him through the town of Gettysburg. The want of cavalry had been and was again seriously felt. Under the impression that the enemy were entirely routed,—my own two divisions exhausted by some six hours' hard fighting,—prudence led me to be content with what had been gained, and not push forward troops exhausted and necessarily disordered, probably to encounter fresh troops of the enemy." . . . "Brigadier-General Archer was taken prisoner by the enemy." . . . "Pettigrew's brigade, under its gallant leader, fought most admirably and sustained heavy loss." Three things in this report will not escape observation. First, that the Federal forces offered a "determined resistance;" second, that the want of cavalry "was again seriously felt;" and, third, that no mention is made either of the capture of Archer's or of the larger part of Davis's brigades. In connection with the first point, it may be well to consider the comparatively recent account of General Heth, in which, after mentioning that upon his first advance, meeting with no opposition, when within a mile or so of the town two of his brigades (Archer's and Davis's) were then deployed to the right and left of the railroad leading into Gettysburg, and with the railroad as a point of direction were ordered to advance and occupy Gettysburg. "These brigades on moving forward soon struck the enemy, which proved to be Reynolds's corps of the Federal army, and were driven back with some loss." . . . "My division was then formed

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 223.

in a wooded ravine to the right of the railroad, the ground rising in front and rear. The enemy was evidently in force in my front. General Rodes, commanding a division of Ewell's corps, *en route* to Cashtown, was following a road running north of Gettysburg. Rodes hearing the firing at Gettysburg, faced by the left flank and approached the town. He soon became heavily engaged, and seeing this I sought for and found General Lee, saying to the general, 'Rodes is very heavily engaged; had I not better attack?' General Lee replied, 'No; I am not prepared to bring on a general engagement to-day; Longstreet is not up.' Returning to my division, I soon discovered that the enemy were moving troops from my front and pushing them against Rodes. I reported this fact to General Lee, and again requested to be permitted to attack. Permission was given. My division numbered some seven thousand muskets. I found in my front a heavy skirmish line and two lines of battle. My division swept over these without halting. My loss was severe. In twenty-five minutes I lost two thousand seven hundred men killed and wounded." Certainly no idea of a "determined resistance," such as is spoken of by Hill, is conveyed by the language of Heth; in fact, the reverse is fairly inferrible from it, and yet Hill's version is altogether the more likely to be accurate, as it is not only confirmed by the testimony of Federal officers, but, moreover, appears to be corroborated by the fact mentioned by Heth himself, that he lost two thousand seven hundred men killed and wounded, out of a division of seven thousand, in twenty-five minutes; a loss of over one-third in so short a space of time is quite calculated to check the ardor of even the most dashing troops. And lastly, General Lee, in his final report on the campaign in Pennsylvania, puts it thus: General Heth, when within a mile of the town, sent two brigades forward to reconnoitre. "They drove in the advance of the enemy very gallantly, but subsequently encountered largely superior numbers, and were compelled to retire with loss, Brigadier-General Archer, commanding one of the brigades, being taken prisoner. General Heth then prepared for action, and as soon as Pender arrived to support him, was ordered by General Hill to advance. The artillery was placed in position, and the engagement opened with vigor. General Heth pressed the enemy steadily back, breaking his first and second lines and attacking his third with great resolution. About 2½ P.M. the advance of Ewell's corps, consisting of Rodes's division, with Carter's battalion of artillery, arrived by the Middletown Road, and forming on Heth's left, nearly at right angles with his line, became warmly engaged with fresh numbers of the enemy. Heth's troops having suffered heavily in their pro-

tracted contest with a superior force, were relieved by Pender's, and Early coming up by the Heidlersburg Road soon afterwards, took position on the left of Rodes, when a general advance was made. The enemy gave way on all sides, and were driven through Gettysburg with great loss. Major-General Reynolds, who was in command, was killed."¹ This final report, it should be borne in mind, was written in January, 1864, six months after the battle. It is consequently a matter of surprise that General Lee should display such a want of accuracy in an important official document respecting a fact, then of such general notoriety, as that of the time of the death of Reynolds. The general advance of the Confederate troops is stated to have been subsequent to 2½ P.M., and after that hour that "Major-General Reynolds" . . . "was killed," as it would appear from the report, in Gettysburg. But passing this over, what becomes of Heth's account if Lee is right, when the latter asserts that Heth's troops were relieved by Pender's before the general advance was made?

General Lee, as well as a large number of Confederate officers of high rank, attribute in a measure their want of success at Gettysburg to the absence of cavalry. The only reference on the part of Lee to the subject is that in his final report, in which the embarrassment, considered to be due to such cause, is limited to the movements of his army "preceding the battle of Gettysburg."² General Hill goes further, saying that "the want of cavalry was again seriously felt." Colonel Taylor, of Lee's staff, remarks, "Now as to the battle itself. The first great disadvantage experienced by General Lee was the unexpected absence of his cavalry."³ General Alexander, chief of artillery of Longstreet's corps, declares that their "information of the enemy's movements was incomplete on account of the absence of all of the cavalry, or nearly all, with General Stuart, who, instead of being between us and the enemy, was on a raid around him."⁴ General Wilcox, of Hill's corps, expresses himself to the same effect, observing that a scout reported that Hooker had crossed the Potomac and was moving north. "Without his cavalry General Lee could not divine the purpose of the enemy, but he determined, with the view of guarding his communications with Virginia and to check the advance west, to concentrate his forces east of the mountains."⁵ General Long, military secretary to General Lee, says, "When, however," Lee "had crossed the Potomac, the absence of his cavalry, caused by the fatal blunder of Stuart, which

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 40.

² *Idem*, vol. ii. p. 44.

³ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 82.

⁴ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 99.

⁵ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 112

separated it from the army at the most critical time, obliged him to grope his way in the dark, and precipitated him, by the want of timely notice, into a premature engagement with the enemy.”¹ General Heth is the most emphatic, saying, “The failure to crush the Federal army in Pennsylvania in 1863, in the opinion of almost all the officers of the Army of Northern Virginia, can be expressed in five words,—*the absence of our cavalry.*”² These extracts sufficiently indicate the prevailing impression among a very numerous class of Confederate officers, namely, that the cavalry arm of the service was actually wanting to the Confederate chief. And yet on this point the statements of Generals J. E. B. Stuart and Fitz-Hugh Lee are diametrically in opposition to those which have just been cited. Stuart, in the draft of his report on the Gettysburg campaign, refers to this subject, and replies to the unfavorable criticism of his fellow-officers in the following manner: “It was thought by many that my command could have rendered more service had it been in advance of the army the first day at Gettysburg, and the commanding general complains of a want of cavalry on that occasion; but it must be remembered that the cavalry (Jenkins’s brigade) specially selected for advance-guard to the army by the commanding general on account of its geographical location at the time was available for this purpose, and had two batteries of horse artillery serving with it. If, therefore, the peculiar functions of cavalry with the army were not satisfactorily performed in the absence of my command, it should rather be attributed to the fact that Jenkins’s brigade was not as efficient as it ought to have been, and as its numbers (three thousand eight hundred) on leaving Virginia warranted us in expecting. Even at that time, by its reduction incident to the campaign, it numbered far more than the cavalry which successfully covered Jackson’s flank movement at Chancellorsville, turned back Stoneman from the James, and drove three thousand five hundred cavalry, under Averill, across the Rappahannock. Properly handled, such a command should have done everything requisite, and left nothing to detract by the remotest implication from the brilliant exploits of their comrades achieved under circumstances of great hardship and danger.”³ General Fitz-Hugh Lee, in his review of the first two days’ operations at Gettysburg, is quite as emphatic. “The much-abused cavalry,” he says, “is lifted into great prominence, and is constrained to feel complimented by the statement of many of these critics, that the failure to crush the Federal army in

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 122.

² Idem, vol. iv. p. 155.

³ Idem, vol. ii. p. 76.

Pennsylvania in 1863 can be expressed 'in five words,' viz., 'the absence of our cavalry'; but such language implies an accusation against General J. E. B. Stuart, its commander, who has been charged with a neglect of duty in not reporting the passage of the Potomac by Hooker's army (afterwards Meade's), and with disobedience of orders, which resulted in placing the Federal army between his command and the force of General Lee, thereby putting out the eyes of his own 'giant.' . . . "From the 25th of June to July 2, General Lee deplored Stuart's absence, and almost hourly wished for him, and yet it was by his permission his daring chief of cavalry was away. General Stuart cannot, therefore, be charged with the responsibility of the failure at Gettysburg." And elsewhere Fitz-Hugh Lee remarks, "In justice to Stuart, it may be said that he had calculated upon the brigade of Jenkins, and White's battalion of cavalry, which accompanied Generals Ewell and Early, and Jones's and Robertson's brigades, which were left to guard the passes of the Blue Ridge, and were to rejoin General Lee as soon as the enemy crossed the river, to do all that was necessary."² On the other hand, General Early, in reviewing the causes of Lee's defeat, expresses his opinion in the following manner: "I have never thought that our failure at Gettysburg was due to the absence of Stuart's cavalry, though I can well understand the perplexity and annoyance it caused General Lee before the enemy was found. He was found, however, without the aid of cavalry, and when found, though by accident, he furnished us the opportunity to strike him a fatal blow." . . . "It is difficult" . . . "to perceive of what more avail in ascertaining and reporting the movements of the Federal army Stuart's cavalry could have been if it had moved on the west of South Mountain than individual scouts employed for that purpose, while it is very certain that his movement on the other flank greatly perplexed and bewildered the Federal commanders, and compelled them to move slower. It is not improbable, however, that it would have been better for him to hurry on and not meddle with the wagon-train he captured; but then the temptation was so great to a poor Confederate."³ Lieutenant-Colonel Fremantle, of the Coldstream Guards, who was present with Lee's army at Gettysburg, and who has expressed great admiration for the gallantry and determination of the Southern people in his "Three Months in the Southern States," writes, under date of June 30, as follows: "I had a long talk with many officers about the approaching

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. v. p. 162.

² *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 75.

³ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 269.

‘battle, which evidently cannot now be delayed long, and will take place on this road’ (the one towards Gettysburg) “instead of in the direction of Harrisburg, as we had supposed. Ewell, who has laid York as well as Carlisle under contribution, has been ordered to reunite. Every one, of course, speaks with confidence. I remarked that it would be a good thing for them if on this occasion they had cavalry to follow up the broken infantry in the event of their succeeding in beating them. But to my surprise they all spoke of their cavalry as not efficient for that purpose. In fact, Stuart’s men, though excellent at making raids, capturing wagons and stores, and cutting off communications, seem to have no idea of charging infantry under any circumstances. Unlike the cavalry with Bragg’s army, they wear swords, but seem to have little idea of using them; they hanker after their carbines and revolvers. They constantly ride with their swords between their left leg and the saddle, which has a very funny appearance; but their horses are generally good, and they ride well. The infantry and artillery of this army do not seem to respect the cavalry very much, and often jeer at them.”¹ In his account of the operations of General Gregg’s division of Federal cavalry, on the right flank of the army at Gettysburg, Colonel Brooke-Rawle notices this disinclination of Stuart’s cavalry to make use of the sabre. His description of Gregg’s brilliant charge on the afternoon of the 3d of July, which foiled Stuart’s attempt to surprise the rear of our main line of battle, which was to have been executed simultaneously with Pickett’s assault in front, is so much in point that an extract from it is here given: “As Town ordered sabres to be drawn and the column to advance, Custer dashed up with similar orders, and placed himself at its head. The two columns drew nearer and nearer, the Confederates outnumbering their opponents as three or four to one. The gait increased,—first the trot, then the gallop. Hampton’s battle-flag floated in the van of the brigade. The orders of the Confederate officers could be heard by those in the woods on their left,—‘Keep to your sabres, men! Keep to your sabres!’ for the lessons they had learned at Brandy Station and at Aldie had been severe. There the cry had been, ‘Put up your sabres! Draw your pistols and fight like gentlemen!’ But the sabre was never a favorite weapon with the Confederate cavalry, and now, in spite of the lessons of the past, the warnings of the present were not heeded by all.”² . . . “The successful re-

¹ *Three Months in the Southern States*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Fremantle, Am. Ed., p. 250.

² *Annals of the War*, p. 481, and note to p. 483.

sult of this magnificent cavalry charge was attributed by the victors to the steadiness and efficiency with which they used the sabre, *en masse*, against greatly superior numbers of the enemy, many of whom had exchanged that weapon for the revolver."

The main features of the determined resistance offered by the First Corps having thus at some length been presented, the part taken in the battle of the 1st of July by the Eleventh Corps remains to be described. Shortly after the death of Reynolds, General Schurz, who had assumed the command of the Eleventh Corps, met the Third Division, the head of that part of his column which had moved by the Taneytown Road, near Cemetery Hill. This was probably a little after 1 P.M., although General Howard suggests that it may have been as early as 12.45 P.M.,¹ whilst his chief of artillery states that at 10 A.M. "the head of the Eleventh Corps had" . . . "just come in sight of Gettysburg."² The narrative of this last-mentioned officer does not, however, agree in several important particulars with the reports of other officers. For instance, both Howard and Schurz speak of Barlow's division (the First) as marching on the direct road from Emmetsburg, and the other two by cross-roads leading into the Taneytown Road, Howard adding that one battery was with the First Division and the remaining four batteries with the other two divisions; whereas the chief of artillery represents it that one battery was marching with Schurz's division (the Third) and one with Steinwehr's (the Second), and that "the remaining three were together between the two rear divisions."³ It would certainly have been quite easy to arrange these five batteries so that one should have been at the head of the Third, one at the rear of the Second, and the remaining three between those two divisions, but such an arrangement would not have allowed a battery to the First Division, of which Schurz speaks. Be this as it may, however, his statement as to the time when the batteries reached the town, and which is of far more consequence, is by no means clear. After mentioning that Howard had intelligence of the death of Reynolds at 11.30 A.M., he remarks, "I reached Gettysburg in an hour after receiving General Howard's order with the batteries, and as the infantry moved through the town to the front I sent with them four batteries,—Wheeler and Heckman to the left, on the Seminary Road, and Dilger and Wilkinson to the right, with Gen. Barlow's division. The remaining battery, Captain Wei-

¹ Campaign of Gettysburg, by O. O. Howard, Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, p. 55.

² Philadelphia Weekly Times, May 31, 1879.

³ *I*dem, May 31, 1879.

drich, I left at Cemetery Hill, with General Steinwehr." Schurz advanced the Third, now become Schimmelpfennig's division, directing it to be deployed on the right of the First Corps in two lines. Shortly afterwards Barlow's division, arriving by the Emmetsburg Road, passed through the town to the north at half after one o'clock, and, halting at the Almshouse, on the Harrisburg Road, to remove knapsacks, was then ordered to form at the double-quick on the right of the Third Division, in order to dislodge the enemy from a piece of woods to the right of the Eleventh Corps. Meanwhile, says Howard, as Schurz "was conducting his Third Division to battle I left orders for Steinwehr and Osborne" (his chief of artillery) "to halt and form upon Cemetery Ridge." Accompanying Barlow's division, Howard, upon reaching the right of the Eleventh Corps, turned and rode along the line to Doubleday's division on the left, and there seeing General Wadsworth, about two o'clock gave him orders to hold the position as long as he could and then retire. The rest of Howard's description, namely, that part of it respecting the disposition of the troops on the left of the line, differs so radically from all the other accounts and from the fact, that it seems to be a creation of the imagination. He says, "The left of Doubleday's line, resting on a small stream, called Willoughby's Run, extended to an elevation north of the Chambersburg Road, and was then refused. Then there was an interval occupied after 1 P.M. by Wheeler's and Dilger's batteries, belonging to the Eleventh Corps. From this place to Rock Creek, almost at right angles with the First Corps line, were the two divisions of the Eleventh Corps,—Barlow's and Schimmelpfennig's. Such was the position of the troops."¹ The account of the disposition of the troops on the right is also very inaccurate, for it will be remembered that the Ninetieth Pennsylvania, of Baxter's brigade, which was the flanking regiment at the right of the line when Robinson's division took position on Seminary Ridge, was refused and stretched along the Mummasburg Road. Schimmelpfennig's division went to the right of the Ninetieth Pennsylvania in prolongation of its line, but, not connecting with it, left a dangerous break between. The Second Brigade, of Schimmelpfennig's division, was in a field farther to the right, near to and east of the Carlisle Road. Schurz was directed to move forward and seize a wooded height in front of his left, but before he had advanced any distance, information having been brought shortly before three o'clock that part of Ewell's corps was

¹ Campaign of Gettysburg, by O. O. Howard. Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, p. 56.

coming in towards the right of the Federal line, between the Harrisburg and York Roads, the order was countermanded by Howard. The enemy was thus enabled to occupy this important height in force without material opposition. Hill fixes the time that the right wing of Ewell's corps (Rodes's division) made its appearance on his left, and was formed at right angles with his line, at about half after two o'clock.¹ The correct time was probably sooner, for Early states that Rodes "came down on the road from Mummasburg about 2 o'clock P.M., and became engaged on Heth's left," and that he "arrived about an hour after Rodes got up,"² or at 3 P.M. Heth, on seeing Rodes thus engaged, "sought for and found General Lee, saying," as he narrates, "to the general, 'Rodes is very heavily engaged; had I not better attack?'" General Lee replied, 'No; I am not prepared to bring on a general engagement to-day; Longstreet is not up.' Returning to my division, I soon discovered that the enemy were moving troops from my front and pushing them against Rodes. I reported this fact to General Lee, and again requested to be permitted to attack. Permission was given."³ Whilst Rodes was thus engaged Early's division had been brought into action on his left with great success. The movements of his brigades had been very prompt and rapid, which brought his troops in the rear and flank of the force then confronting Rodes.⁴ Early's batteries, posted on a slope between the Carlisle and Harrisburg Roads, were replied to by three of the batteries of the Eleventh Corps at the front, and by Weidrich's 3-inch rifled guns on Cemetery Hill. The shot from the latter, however, only reaching the line of the cavalry, Buford complained of the firing; but, as Howard naïvely remarks, "fortunately nobody on our side was killed by this fire." The attack of the enemy was at this time proceeding simultaneously along the whole line. Schimmelpfennig's division speedily gave way, falling back most probably before three o'clock. Wadsworth, in his report, says about half-past two;⁵ and according to the testimony of some, retreating "before the enemy's skirmishers."⁶ Barlow's division, on the extreme right, forming behind Rock Creek to meet a charge from Gordon's, Hays's, and Avery's brigades, of Early's division, was next struck. In a moment the open fields beyond were filled with the disordered troops of Howard's corps flying in confusion. "Where Barlow was aligned lay a line of wounded and dead men who had fallen as they stood, and in their midst

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. ii. p. 223.

³ Idem, vol. iv. p. 158.

⁵ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 307.

² Idem, vol. iv. p. 253.

⁴ Idem, vol. iv. p. 254.

⁶ Idem, Part I., p. 308.

lay Barlow himself, sorely stricken."¹ Major Brady, of the Seventeenth Connecticut, Barlow's division, speaks of "the rush to the rear of troops directly in advance" of part of his regiment.² "The Federal flank," according to Major Daniel, of Early's staff, "had been shriveled up as a scroll, and the whole force gave way."³ The troops from Rodes's front moved towards the town, followed by Early's division; Hays's brigade, of the latter division, alone entering it.⁴ Howard himself corroborates the general features of the foregoing account by stating that "soon the division of the Eleventh Corps nearest Doubleday was flying to the shelter of the town, widening the gap there, and the enemy in line pressed rapidly through the interval. Of course Robinson and Wadsworth had to give way."⁵ After the Eleventh Corps had been driven from the field but one alternative remained to the First. It had been successfully resisting the heavy shocks directed against its front by a force twofold greater than its own, but now there were superadded the blows on its flank from another force at least numerically equal to the first. The limit of human endurance had been reached, and it fell back, fighting as it went.

Howard was already on Cemetery Hill when Von Amsburg's regiment, of his corps, the first to arrive, reached there. Leading the way with his corps flag, he placed the regiment on the right of Steinwehr's line. General Ames, who succeeded Barlow after the latter had been severely wounded, came to him about the same time and said, "'I have no division; it is all cut to pieces,' to which Howard replied, 'Do what you can, Ames, to gather the fragments and extend the line to the right.' He did so, and succeeded better than he had feared."⁶ Yet it has been asserted that about fifteen hundred men of this corps were collected some miles in the rear of the field by the provost guard of the Twelfth Corps. The First Corps, compelled to yield to the severe pressure on their front and flanks, were still maintaining a position near the seminary, as they had received no orders to withdraw altogether, "although the enemy were marching on the town, and something had to be done immediately."⁷ The line of the Second Brigade, of the Third

¹ Address by Major Daniel, p. 20.

² Rebellion Record, vol. x. p. 181.

³ Address by Major Daniel, p. 20.

⁴ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 254.

⁵ Campaign of Gettysburg, by O. O. Howard, Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, p. 58.

⁶ Campaign of Gettysburg, by O. O. Howard, Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, p. 58.

⁷ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 310.

Division, had begun to give way not long after 3 P.M., and had fallen back slowly under a severe fire to a position which Meredith's brigade had taken shortly before, but the new line having been forced to give way on all sides, the whole of it shortly after withdrew to Cemetery Hill. The First Brigade, of the Third Division, forming the left of the corps line, was in like manner obliged, about 4 P.M., to retire from the field to the slight cover immediately west of the seminary, where it remained for a short time, until the batteries and most of the troops had moved through the town, when it retreated to Cemetery Hill.

In reference to the time when the first troops reached Cemetery Hill there is again a conflict of statement. Howard asserting that, according to the time which he "had gone by all day," it was half after four o'clock when General Hancock first met him there.¹ This Hancock contradicts, saying that he arrived upon the field about 3 P.M., or between that and 3.30, when he found the fighting about over, and when "there had been an attempt to reform some of the Eleventh Corps as they passed over Cemetery Hill, but it had not been very successful;" . . . "there may have been one thousand to twelve hundred at most organized troops of that corps in position on the hill,"² . . . "and these were a portion of Steinwehr's division, which, with the artillery of the corps, was left there by Howard when he marched up in the morning."³ In the spirited account of the battle by Bates it is stated⁴ that Steinwehr saw that "however powerful and effective his own guns might prove while unassailed," . . . "they would be unable to live long when attacked unless protected." . . . "He accordingly threw up lunettes around each gun;" . . . "not mere heaps of stubble and turf, but solid works, of such height and thickness as to defy the most powerful bolts which the enemy could throw against them, with smooth and perfectly level platforms on which the guns could be worked." Upon whose authority this statement is based does not appear, but Hancock⁵ characterizes it as "a great error; there were no works of the kind above described on that field when" he "arrived there, and all that" he "saw in the way of 'works' were some holes (not deep) dug to sink the wheels and trains of the pieces." Three regiments of the First Brigade, of Steinwehr's division, under the command of Colonel Costar, which had been

¹ Campaign of Gettysburg, by O. O. Howard, Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, p. 58.

² Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. v. p. 169.

³ Idem, vol. v. p. 171.

⁴ Battle of Gettysburg, by Bates, p. 76.

⁵ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. v. p. 172.

ordered forward to the support of Schimmelpfennig's and Barlow's divisions, and were posted on the right of the Harrisburg Road, just north of the town, were borne down by Early's advancing troops, and most of them taken prisoners. The remaining regiment of that brigade, as the Federal soldiers were retiring through the town, occupied the houses on either side of the Baltimore Pike, near its junction with the Emmetsburg Road and a stone wall just below the cemetery. From their cover they checked the advance of the enemy and protected the cannoniers on the heights above.¹ The retreat, while trying to the troops of the First Corps, in consequence of their becoming entangled with the Eleventh in the streets of the town, was yet conducted by the former with some regard to order, the men frequently making a stand, until they finally reached the heights. Early's troops, flushed with success, "exclaimed as their officers passed along their lines, 'Let us go on!'"² Lee, too, then shared the enthusiasm of his men, although afterwards, in his first report, he alleges that "the attack was not pressed that afternoon, the enemy's force being unknown, and it being considered advisable to await the arrival of the rest of our troops." "General Lee," says Colonel Taylor, of his staff,³ "witnessed the flight of the Federals through Gettysburg and up the hills beyond. He then directed me to go to General Ewell and to say to him that from the position which he occupied he could see the enemy retreating over those hills without organization and in great confusion; that it was only necessary to press 'those people' in order to secure possession of the heights, and that if possible he wished him to do this. In obedience to these instructions I proceeded immediately to General Ewell and delivered the order of General Lee, and after receiving from him some message for the commanding general in regard to the prisoners captured, returned to the latter and reported that his order had been delivered. General Ewell did not express any objection or indicate the existence of any impediment to the execution of the order conveyed to him, but left the impression on my mind that it would be executed." . . . "The troops were not moved forward, and the enemy proceeded to occupy and fortify the position which it was designed that General Ewell should seize. Major-General Edward Johnson, whose division reached the field after the engagement and formed on the left of Early, in a conversation had with me since the war about this circumstance, in which I sought an explanation of our inaction at that time, assured me that there was no

¹ History of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, vol. ii. pp. 865-66.

² Address by Major Daniel, p. 20.

³ Annals of the War, p. 308.

hindrance to his moving forward, but that after getting his command in line of battle, and before it became seriously engaged or had advanced any great distance, for some unexplained reason he had received orders to halt. This was after General Lee's message was delivered to General Ewell." Lee and staff had reached the field in the afternoon, near the close of the battle. Soon after Anderson's division arrived, but being too late to participate in the action was halted on the ground held by Pender when the battle began,¹ and at about the same time Longstreet came in person, his troops being a few miles behind.²

Thus practically terminated the first day's battle; but what were the fruits of the victory to General Lee? Defeated by overwhelming numbers, the men of the First Corps, who had borne the brunt of the fight, were again in position, and determined to contest the ground they now occupied. Buford was near by to assist. But why did the victors pause in their pursuit? A pause which was to prove fatal to their anticipations of a favorable issue to their appeal to arms. Ewell had been ordered to seize the heights, and the belief was that the order could and would have been obeyed, as, in the opinion of General Johnson, there was no hindrance to his moving forward. Indeed, there would appear to be no justification for his disobedience if Colonel Fremantle, of the Guards, is correct in his report of the "universal feeling in the Confederate army," which "was one of profound contempt for an enemy whom they had beaten so constantly and under so many disadvantages."³ Naturally, the question whether the Confederates should have followed up their success on the afternoon of the first day has been the occasion of much animated discussion both among military men and civilians, South and North. As the legitimate result of these discussions, making due allowance for the considerable element of personal feeling exhibited by many of the Southern officers and civilians, it may be stated that the failure to pursue was fatal to Lee's army. On this point of controversy Longstreet is most emphatic in the expression of his views:⁴ "The crushing defeat inflicted on the advance of the Federal army in the casual encounter of the 1st at Willoughby's Run should have been pushed to extremities, that occasion furnishing one of the few opportunities ever furnished for 'pursuit pell-mell.'" Ewell, as has already been mentioned, not only received the order to pursue, but expressed no objection to, or difficulty in the way of, its execution.

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 113. ² Idem, vol. iv. p. 66.

³ Three Months in the Southern States, by Lieutenant-Colonel Fremantle, p. 256.

⁴ Annals of the War, p. 620.

The "hunt was up," and in the language of Lee, as applied to the third day, some of "his people" seemed simply to desire to be "turned loose" at their enemy. Ewell¹ assigns as reasons, however, in his report, for not carrying out the order, that he could not bring artillery to bear on the hill, and that the troops with him "were jaded by twelve hours' marching and fighting." . . . "Cemetery Hill was not assailable from the town," and in consequence he determined with Johnson's division to take possession of a wooded hill which commanded Cemetery Hill, but before Johnson got up the enemy was reported to be moving on his left flank, and by the time that report could be investigated and "Johnson placed in position the night was far advanced."² The report of Ewell, and the memorandum of Colonel Taylor, need only to be compared in order that a conclusion may be drawn. The other corps commander, Hill, being "under the impression that the enemy were entirely routed,—his own two divisions exhausted by some six hours' hard fighting,—prudence led him to be content with what had been gained, and not push forward troops exhausted and necessarily disordered, probably to encounter fresh troops of the enemy."³ In reviewing the operations of the first two days, General Fitz-Hugh Lee considers that the Confederates were 'within a stone's throw of peace' at Gettysburg;" and although in numbers as sixty-two thousand is to one hundred and five thousand (which latter, however, he thinks is an overestimate) before any portion of either army had become engaged, yet the advantages were so manifestly on General Lee's side, in consequence of the more rapid concentration of his troops upon a common point, that the heart of every Southern soldier beat with the lofty confidence of certain victory."⁴ . . . In referring to the first day, he puts the question,⁵ "Did such failure at Gettysburg arise from Ewell and Hill not pushing their success on the 1st of July?" And he answers it thus: "I have always been one of those who regarded it a great misfortune that these two corps commanders did not continue to force the fighting upon that day. Each had two divisions of their corps engaged, thus leaving one division to each corps, viz., Johnson, of Ewell's, and Anderson, of Hill's, at their service for further work,—something over ten thousand men." . . . "Estimating those four divisions at the close of the action at an average of four thousand five hundred men a piece, we had eighteen thousand men; add the ten thousand of the

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 261.

² Idem, vol. iv. p. 262.

³ Idem, vol. ii. p. 223.

⁴ Idem, vol. v. p. 163.

⁵ Idem, vol. v. p. 167.

two divisions not engaged, and there will be found twenty-eight thousand men ready to move on, flushed with victory and confident of success." In March, 1877, he had expressed the opinion in writing¹ that "a little more marching, perhaps a little more fighting, would have given us the coveted position, and that in such an event the battle of Gettysburg would have had another name, and possibly another result,—who knows?" In April, 1878,² he asserts, after fairly presenting the evidence before him, "I am authorized in reaffirming that 'a little more marching, perhaps a little more fighting,' would have gained for us the possession of the heights on the evening of the 1st of July." General Heth, in his published account, already referred to, makes no allusion to this subject; regarding the fight on the 1st as being without order or system on their part,—at the same time considering a systematic plan of battle impossible from the fact that they had "accidentally *stumbled* into the fight."³ General Rodas contents himself by remarking that his troops were "greatly exhausted by their march, and somewhat disorganized by the hot engagement and rapid pursuit," but that though they "were halted and prepared for further action," yet the attack was not ordered for two reasons: first, because Ewell, in the midst of the engagement which had then just taken place, had informed him through one of his officers that General Lee did not wish a general engagement brought on; and, second, because, "before the completion of his defeat," . . . "the enemy had begun to establish a line of battle on the heights back of the town, and seeing no Confederate troops on his right, and that Early, who was on his left, was awaiting orders, although his superiors were upon the ground, he concluded that the order not to bring on a general engagement was still in force."⁴ How do these reasons harmonize with Colonel Taylor's statement that he delivered the order of General Lee to Ewell to press "those people," in order to secure possession of the heights? Moreover, the opinion of Colonel Allan, of Ewell's staff, is, that⁵ "the Confederates would probably have been successful, first, had Ewell and Hill pushed Howard's broken troops over the top of Cemetery Hill on the first day." Early, however, takes issue, in a well-prepared defense, with those of his brother officers who have thus criticised the failure of the Confederate commanders to follow up their success on that day, and arrives at the conclusion that "it was not, therefore, a mere question of a little more marching, nor of a little

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 75.

² *Idem*, vol. v. p. 175.

³ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 159.

⁴ *Idem*, vol. ii. p. 149.

⁵ *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 80.

more fighting, either, which was involved. If we had made an assault on Cemetery Hill and occupied it, it would have involved a bloody struggle." . . . "Before Johnson arrived all thought of moving on Cemetery Hill that afternoon had been abandoned, as it was then evident that the enemy had rallied from the dismay of his defeat."¹ General Hancock has expressed the opinion that "if the Confederates had continued the pursuit of General Howard on the afternoon of the 1st of July at Gettysburg, they would have driven him over and beyond Cemetery Hill."² But after he had made his dispositions for defending it, he did not think "the Confederate force then present could have carried it." It was the remnant of the First Corps, however, that at once gave stability to the new line. Wadsworth's division, with a battery of artillery, was posted on Culp's Hill, and the remainder of the corps on the right and left of the Taneytown Road connecting with the left of the Eleventh Corps. When these dispositions had about been completed, one division of the Twelfth Corps came up, and later another division of the same corps arrived. Sickles, it seems, had received word at Emmetsburg, between two and three o'clock in the afternoon,³ from Howard, that the First and Eleventh Corps were engaged with a superior force; that Reynolds had fallen, and urging him to come to their relief. In consequence he made a forced march with a part of his corps, and arrived, with about a division, shortly after the troops had been posted on Cemetery Hill. But whilst it nowhere distinctly appears that Sickles had received the earlier order of Reynolds, yet Bates declares that he was "morally culpable for not going to the assistance of the forces engaged at Gettysburg on the first day," . . . "he having early in the day been ordered up by Reynolds and having no valid excuse for disregarding the summons."⁴

The extracts from the various reports and narratives which have been made use of are perhaps too copious; but, at all events, it is unnecessary to multiply the opinions of military men on the subject. Public sentiment, with almost unanimity, has become settled in the conviction that the Confederates surrendered their "golden opportunity" when they abandoned the immediate pursuit of the Federal forces on the afternoon of the 1st of July. The view of the Southern people may be gathered from Pollard's "History of the War":⁵ "The result

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 260.

² Idem, vol. v. p. 168.

³ Conduct of the War, Part I., p. 296.

⁴ Battle of Gettysburg, by Bates, p. 186.

⁵ Southern History of the War, Third Year, by Pollard, p. 26.

of the day's fight may be summed up thus: we had attacked a considerable force, had driven it over three miles, captured five thousand prisoners, and killed and wounded many thousands. Our own loss was not heavy, though a few brigades suffered severely. If the attack had been pressed in the afternoon of that day there is little doubt that our forces could have got the heights and captured this entire detachment of Meade's army." Colonel Bachelder, whose "long study of the field" of Gettysburg has given him, as has justly been remarked by General Hancock,¹ "a fund of accurate information in great detail, which" . . . "is not possessed by any one else," in a letter to General Fitz-Hugh Lee presents the prevailing Union conviction in the following words:² "There is no question but what a combined attack on Cemetery Hill, made within an hour, would have been successful." . . . "Unquestionably the *great mistake of the battle* was the failure to follow the Union forces through the town and attack them before they could reform on Cemetery Hill. Lane's and Thomas's brigades, of Pender's division, and Smith's, of Early's division, were at hand for such a purpose and had fired scarcely a shot. Dole's, Hoke's, and Hays's brigades were in good fighting condition, and several others would have done good service. The artillery was up and in an admirable position to have covered an assault, which could have been pushed, under cover of the houses, to within a few rods of the Union position." Finally Swinton says,³ "Never was pause at the door of victory more fatal to the hopes of a commander. Had the enemy followed up his advantage by seizing the crest of Cemetery Hill or Culp's Hill there would have been no Gettysburg, and indeed it is difficult to forecast what in this case they might not have done, for the Union corps were much scattered and no place of concentration had been secured."

In view of all the evidence which has been presented, is not the conclusion fairly warranted that to the stubborn resistance of the First Corps of the Army of the Potomac on the first day of July, 1863, the ultimate defeat of Lee's invading army is, in a very large measure, to be attributed? A defeat which carried with it the utter destruction of the high hopes formed at the moment Lee commenced the execution of his plan. So terminates the story of the first day's conflict,—a struggle marked with more than ordinary bravery, coolness, and endurance on the part of a large number of the troops engaged, and whose valor rendered possible the splendid victory which finally crowned the Union arms. An achievement, the moral effect of which was instantaneous;

¹ Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. v. p. 168. ² *Idem*, vol. v. p. 172.

³ The Twelve Decisive Battles of the War, by Swinton, p. 332.

for men at once realized that at length a decisive victory had been won, and that thenceforth the days of the Confederacy were numbered.

Impartial critics of the operations of the succeeding days consider that several grave mistakes were committed by the Confederates both as to a portion of their plan and to much of its execution. These errors have been the subject of acrimonious discussion on the part of some of the officers of high rank in the late Confederate service. The mistakes may be summed up as follows: want of co-operation or harmony of action on the 2d of July, it being asserted by Early and others that Longstreet was to commence the attack on the right at an early hour in the morning, and that he failed to make it until late in the afternoon. That on the 3d the attack was to have been renewed at an early hour by Pickett and the other two divisions of Longstreet's corps, while a simultaneous assault was to have been made from the left by Ewell. That Longstreet again delayed until the afternoon, although the advance on the left had been begun at the proper time. Again, that the Federal position should have been turned by the South on the third day by extending the Confederate right so as to endanger Meade's communications with Washington. Again, that the tactical offensive course of Lee on the 2d of July was at variance with the plan of campaign settled upon before leaving Fredericksburg.¹ And again, that the assault of Pickett on the third day should not have been attempted, "the hopelessness" of which had been foreseen by Longstreet.² The repulse of this "hopeless" assault is thus graphically described by Longstreet:³ Pickett "swept past our artillery in splendid style, and the men marched steadily and compactly down the slope. As they started up the ridge over one hundred cannon from the breastworks of the Federals hurled a rain of canister, grape, and shell down upon them; still they pressed on until half-way up the slope, when the crest of the hill was lit with a solid sheet of flame as the masses of infantry rose and fired. When the smoke cleared away, Pickett's division was gone. Nearly two-thirds of his men lay dead on the field, and the survivors were sullenly retreating down the hill. Mortal man could not have stood that fire. In half an hour the contested field was cleared and the battle of Gettysburg was over." The grand part which the Union artillery took "in this death-struggle with the Confederacy" is here recognized. Hunt, its chief, and Tyler, his able assistant, opened upon Pickett's magnificent assaulting column with their guns from Cemetery Hill to the Round Tops, "tearing vast gaps in the advancing

¹ *Annals of the War*, p. 421.

² *Idem*, p. 429.

³ *Idem*, p. 431.

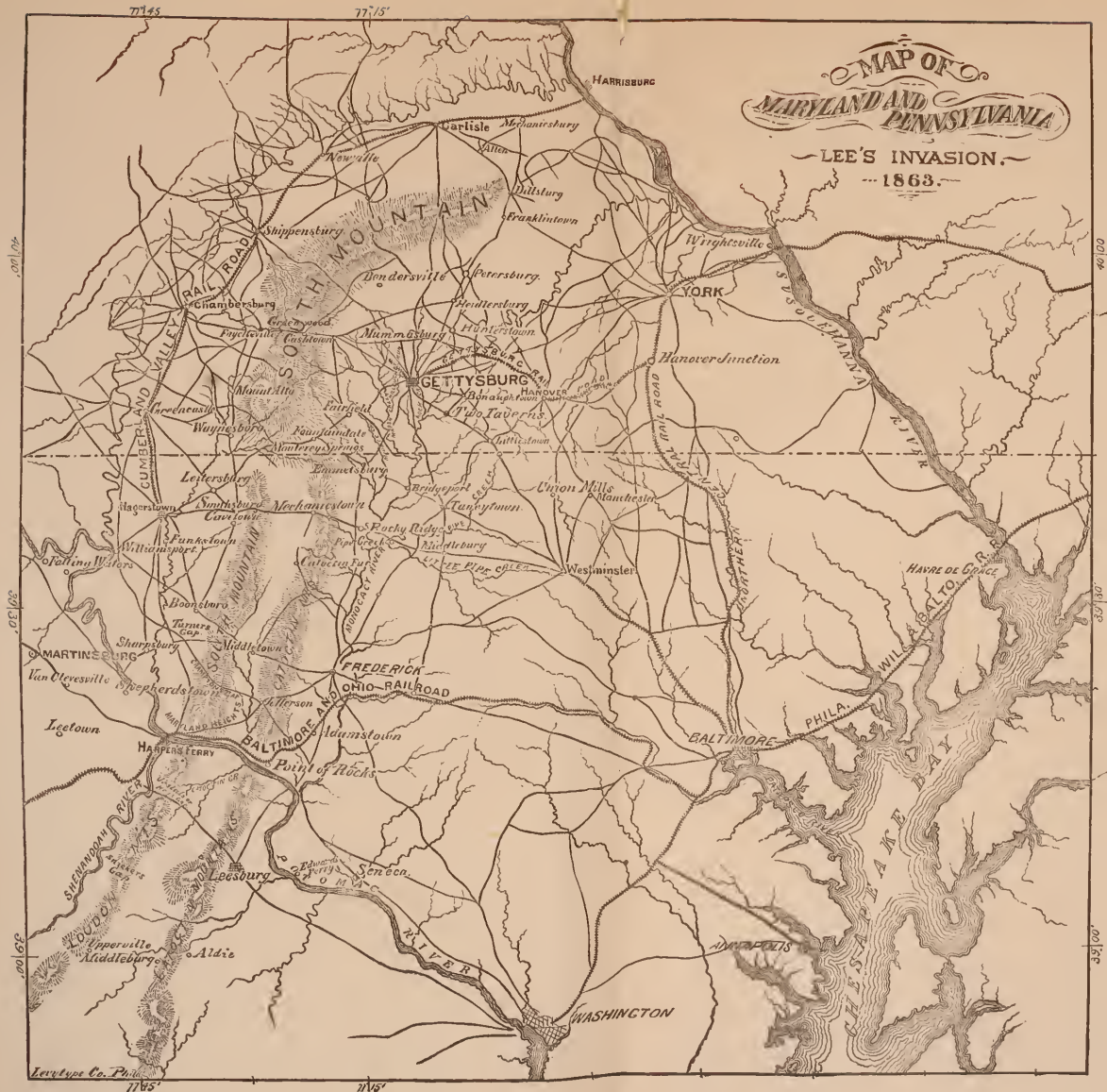
ranks and almost annihilating that proud array of eighteen thousand of the best Southern infantry.”¹ Whilst Pickett’s men were falling back within the Confederate lines Lee rode towards them, and upon meeting General Wilcox, who was almost in tears at the condition of his brigade, said, “Never mind, general, *all this has been MY fault*,—it is *I* that have lost this fight, and you must help me out of it the best way you can.”²

Thus the great battle was ended. Brilliant success had rewarded the valor of the men of the Army of the Potomac, directed by the heroism and skill of its chief. Then when the loud cheers of the victorious troops proclaimed the work accomplished, the good and gallant Meade, reverently uncovering his head, gave utterance in the solemn words “Thank God!” to the profound gratitude which filled his heart.

¹ Memoir of General Robert O. Tyler, p. 15.

² Three Months in the Southern States, by Lieut.-Col. Fremantle, p. 269. See also Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. iv. p. 109.

—LEE'S INVASION.—
—1863.—



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THE BATTLE FIELD
GETTYSBURG.

1st Day
JULY 1st 1863

